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JUNE & JULY 2003, NO. 119, $6.00

UNIVERSAL DEMOCRACY?
LARRY DIAMOND

THE U.S. AND RUSSIA AFTER IRAQ
PAUL J. SAUNDERS

BIOTECH AND BABY FOOD
HENRY I. MILLER AND GREGORY CONKO

PEACEKEEPERS, INC.
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Policy Review® (ISSN 0146-5945) is published bimonthly by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. For more information, write: The Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford CA 94305-6010. Or visit www.hoover.org. Periodicals postage paid at Washington DC and additional mailing offices. The opinions expressed in *Policy Review* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, or their supporters.

EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES: *Policy Review*, 818 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 601, Washington DC 20006-2701. Telephone: 202-466-6730. Email: polrev@hoover.stanford.edu. Website: www.policyreview.org.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION: Contact *Policy Review*, Subscriptions Department, P.O. Box 653, Shrub Oak NY 10588 or call toll-free 1-877-558-3727. For address changes (allow six weeks), provide old and new address, including ZIP codes. Second class postage paid at Washington DC and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Policy Review*, Subscriptions Department, P.O. Box 653, Shrub Oak NY 10588. Subscription rates: $36 per year. Add $10 per year for foreign delivery. Copyright 2003 by the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University.

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Universal Democracy?

By Larry Diamond

A short while ago, one of the world's most brutal and entrenched dictatorships was swiftly toppled by the military force of the United States and the United Kingdom. The 2003 Iraq war was launched to disarm Saddam Hussein, but for many of its advocates and supporters, the more compelling aim was to bring about regime change. In fact, the goal is not simply "regime change" but a sweeping political transformation in that country — and, it is hoped, in states throughout its neighborhood — towards what has never existed there before: democracy.

This is the most ambitious effort to foster deliberate political change since European colonial rule drew to a close in the early post-World War II era. Can it succeed? Since Iraq lacks virtually all of the classic favorable conditions, to ask whether it can soon become a democracy is to ask, really, whether any country can become a democracy. Which is to ask as well, can

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Larry Diamond is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and coordinator of the Democracy Program of the Center for Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law at Stanford University's Institute for International Studies. He is coeditor of the Journal of Democracy.

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every country become a democracy?

My answer here is a cautiously optimistic one. The current moment is in many respects without historical precedent. Much is made of the unparalleled gap between the military and economic power of the United States and that of any conceivable combination of competitors or adversaries. But no less unique are these additional facts:

- This breathtaking preponderance of power is held by a liberal democracy.
- The next most powerful global actor is a loose union of countries that are also all liberal democracies.
- The majority of states in the world are already democracies of one sort or another.
- There is no model of governance with any broad normative appeal or legitimacy in the world other than democracy.
- There is growing international legal and moral momentum toward the recognition of democracy as a basic human right of all peoples.
- States and international organizations are intruding on sovereignty in ever more numerous and audacious ways in order to promote democracy and freedom.

In short, the international context has never mattered more to the future of democracy or been more favorable. We are on the cusp of a grand historical tipping point, when a visionary and resourceful strategy could — if it garnered the necessary cooperation and effort *among* the powerful democracies — essentially eliminate authoritarian rule over the next generation or two.[1]

A quarter-century of progress

As SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON has documented in his seminal work, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), a powerful wave of democratic transitions began in April 1974, when the Portuguese dictatorship was overthrown in a military coup. It was far from clear then that

[1]An earlier version of this essay was presented as the Harry Eckstein Lecture at the University of California, Irvine, April 10, 2003. The full original version of this paper, with statistical tables, may be viewed at http://repositories.cdlib.org/csd/03-05/. I am grateful for the research assistance of Terrence Blackburne and Benn Eifert with the data in this paper.

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Portugal would become a democracy. It had never been one before. It had just been through half a century of quasi-fascist rule. The Spanish dictator Francisco Franco held on to power over the border. Both countries were steeped in a Latin, Catholic culture that was dismissed by many political scientists and commentators as being unsuited to democracy. (That logic was also used to explain the virtual absence of democracy in Latin America at the time.) The Portuguese armed forces movement was split into ideological factions, and the country was plagued for 18 months by coups, countercoups, and a succession of fragile provisional governments. Yet the triumph of democracy in Portugal was the beginning of a long wave of democratic expansion in the world that continues to this day.

When the third wave of democratization began in 1974, there were only about 40 democracies in the world, and these were mainly in the advanced industrial countries. There were a few other democracies scattered through Africa, Asia, and Latin America — such as India, Sri Lanka, Botswana, Costa Rica, and Venezuela. But military and one-party dictatorships held sway in most of Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, while all of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were under communist rule.

Since 1974, democracy has expanded dramatically in the world.

Since 1974, democracy — a system of government in which the people choose their leaders at regular intervals through free, fair, and competitive elections — has expanded dramatically in the world. The number and percentage of democracies in the world expanded gradually after April 1974, spreading first to Greece and Spain in the mid-1970s. From 1979 to 1985, the military withdrew in favor of elected civilian governments in about nine Latin American countries. Where military rule was more economically successful, in Chile, the transition was delayed, but it came in 1989, after a heroic effort of peaceful political mobilization.

By then, the third wave of democratization had spread to Asia, first toppling the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines in February 1986, then forcing the complete withdrawal of the Korean military in 1987. That same year, martial law was lifted in Taiwan and a more gradual transition to democracy began there, not to be completed until the first direct elections for president in 1996. But by 1991, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal had all become democracies. Also that year, Thailand suffered what I believe will prove to have been its last military coup, followed by its shortest period of military rule.

By 1987, the third wave had spread to the point where about two of every five states in the world were democracies: all of Western Europe, much of Asia, and most of Latin America. But that still left gaping holes in Eastern Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Democracy was still a regional phe-

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nomenon. This changed dramatically with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and then the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. By 1990, most of the states of Eastern Europe — and even poor and isolated Mongolia — held competitive elections and began to institutionalize democracy.

Freed from the prism of the two superpowers' struggle for geopolitical dominance, and reeling from desperate fiscal crises, African countries began to liberate themselves. In February 1990 two seminal events launched a new wave of democratic transitions in Africa. In Benin, a coalition of forces in civil society, organized in a "sovereign national conference," claimed governing authority and launched a transition to democracy. In South Africa, the apartheid regime released Nelson Mandela from prison and launched a process of political dialogue and normalization that gave birth to democracy in 1994. When these two events occurred, there were only three democracies in Africa — the Gambia, Botswana, and Mauritius. But starting in 1990, Africa experienced a rolling tide of democratic change. Under heavy pressure from international donors as well as their own peoples, most African states by 1997 had at least legalized opposition parties, opened space in civil society, and held multiparty elections. Many of these openings were largely a facade, marred by continued repression and blatant rigging of the vote. But well over a dozen met the minimum conditions of democracy, and in several cases, long-ruling incumbent parties were defeated.

Today, about three-fifths of all the world's states are democracies. There are no global rivals to democratic government.

To appreciate the depth and breadth of the third wave of democratization, consider this: In 1974, there were 41 democracies among the existing 150 states. Of the remaining 109 states, 56 (more than half) of them subsequently made a transition to democracy, and of those 56, only Pakistan, Sudan, and Russia are not democracies today. Moreover, 26 states since 1974 have become independent of colonial rule; 15 of these became democracies upon independence and have remained so, and another six have become democratic after some period of authoritarian rule. Of the 19 new postcommunist states, 11 (58 percent) are democracies. Overall, of the 45 new states created since the third wave began, almost three-quarters (71 percent) are democracies, though in the case of the former Soviet Union, some of them (such as Ukraine, Georgia, and Armenia) are only ambiguously democratic.

As democracy spread to Eastern Europe, a few states in the former Soviet Union, and a number in Africa, while extending deeper into Asia and Latin America, it came during the 1990s to be a *global* phenomenon, the predominant form of government, and the only broadly legitimate form of government in the world. Today, about three-fifths of all the world's states (by the

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count of Freedom House, 121 of 193) are democracies. There are no global rivals to democracy as a broad model of government. Communism is dead. Military rule everywhere lacks appeal and normative justification. One-party states have largely disappeared, for what single party — in this day and age — can credibly claim the wisdom and moral righteousness to rule indefinitely and without criticism or challenge? Only the vague model of an Islamic state has any moral and ideological appeal as an alternative form of government — and then only for a small portion of the world's societies. Moreover, the only actual example of such an Islamic state is the increasingly corrupt, discredited, and illegitimate Islamic Republic in Iran, whose own people overwhelmingly desire to see it replaced by a more truly democratic form of government.

Clearly, most states can become democratic because most states already are. Moreover, the overwhelming bulk of the states that have become democratic during the third wave have remained so, even in countries lacking virtually all of the supposed "conditions" for democracy. Pre-1990 Africa aside, only four democracies have been overthrown by the military in a conventional coup. Two of those (Turkey and Thailand) returned fairly quickly to democracy, and the other two (Pakistan and the Gambia) have felt compelled at least to institute civilian multiparty elections. Several democracies have been suspended in "self-coups" by elected civilian leaders, while other elected rulers have more subtly strangled democracy. Overall, however, only 14 of the 125 democracies that have existed during the third wave have become authoritarian, and in nine of these, democracy has since been restored.

The goal should be a system that combines democracy with freedom, the rule of law, and good government.

If democracy can emerge and persist (now so far for a decade) in an extremely poor, landlocked, overwhelmingly Muslim country like Mali — in which the majority of adults are illiterate and live in absolute poverty and the life expectancy is 44 years — then there is no reason in principle why democracy cannot develop in most other very poor countries. In fact, if we examine the 36 countries that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) classifies as having "Low Human Development," 11 are democracies today. If we widen our scope to look at the bottom third of states classified by the UNDP, the percentage of democracies rises from nearly a third to 41 percent. About a dozen of these have been democracies for a decade or longer. That there should be so many democracies among the world's least developed countries is a phenomenon at least as noteworthy as the overall predominance of democracy in the world, and one profoundly in defiance of established social science theories. It deserves more attention, and I attempt to give it some below.

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Conceptualizing democracy

To comprehend the nature and limits of democratic progress in this third wave, it is useful to conceive of democracy in terms of two thresholds. Countries above the first threshold are, as I have suggested, electoral democracies in the minimal sense that their principal positions of political power are filled through regular, free, fair, and competitive (and therefore multiparty) elections. Electoral democracy can exist in countries with significant violations of human rights, massive corruption, and a weak rule of law. But in order for a country to be a democracy, these defects must be sufficiently contained so that, in elections at least, the will of the voters can be reflected in the outcome and, in particular, unpopular incumbents can be booted from office.[2]

Many people have criticized my emphasis on free, fair, meaningful, and competitive elections as the minimal litmus test of democracy. They say that this may not amount to much. What is the point of having such an "electoral" democracy if the rights of women, minorities, and the poor are extensively violated; if those who are elected take turns plundering the national treasury and abusing power, as happened in Pakistan before the October 1999 coup; if elections merely crown a temporary presidential monarch who can use and abuse power without constraint for his term of office (what University of Notre Dame professor Guillermo O'Donnell calls "delegative democracy")? Indeed, in his new book, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* (Norton, 2003), Fareed Zakaria questions whether we might not do better with less democracy and more rule of law.

My answer to this is twofold. Normatively, I do not argue that we should rest content with such an illiberal and hollowed-out democracy as our goal. The goal for every country should be a political system that combines democracy on the one hand with freedom, the rule of law, and good government on the other — in other words, *liberal democracy*. Beyond the electoral arena, liberal democracy encompasses a vigorous rule of law with an independent and nondiscriminatory judiciary; extensive individual freedoms of belief, speech, publication, association, assembly, and so on; strong protections for the rights of ethnic, cultural, religious, and other minorities; a pluralistic civil society, which affords citizens multiple channels outside of the electoral arena through which to participate and express their interests and values; and civilian control of the military.[3]

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[2]Larry Diamond, "Elections Without Democracy: Thinking About Hybrid Regimes," *Journal of Democracy* (April 2002).

[3]See Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999): 10-12.

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Empirically, the implication that authoritarian and conflict-ridden states should emphasize the rule of law rather than democracy is viable only as a transitional strategy. In reality, democracy and freedom are closely related in the world. Even if we forget about the wealthy countries of the West — all liberal democracies — and examine only the developing and postcommunist countries, we find that the countries where civil liberties and the rule of law are best respected are democracies, and the human rights (and humanitarian) emergencies are invariably to be found in non-democracies.

Each year Freedom House rates each country from 1 to 7 along two scales, political rights (basically to participate and compete democratically) and civil liberties, with 1 being most free and 7 most repressive. There are only two countries in the world that are not democracies and yet have a civil-liberties score below the midpoint on the seven-point scale: Tonga, and Antigua and Barbuda. One can hardly advance a general theory of political development based on these two microstates. To be sure, there are some pretty illiberal democracies in the world, with serious problems of human rights and the rule of law, but the only countries that give their citizens extensive civic freedom and a thorough rule of law are democracies.

The regional distribution

In one respect, democracy is still not quite a global phenomenon. In every region of the world — except for one — at least a third of the states are democracies. Thirty of the 33 states in Latin America and the Caribbean are democracies, and about half of them are now fairly liberal in terms of their levels of freedom. Two-thirds of the former communist countries, half of the Asian states, and even about two-fifths of the African states are now democracies. Only in the Middle East is democracy virtually absent. In fact, among the 16 Arab countries, there is not a single democracy and, with the exception of Lebanon, there never has been.

The exceptionalism of the Middle East becomes even more striking when we examine trends in freedom. Every region of the world has seen a rather significant improvement in the level of freedom — except for one. Regions that had been strongholds of authoritarianism have seen their average freedom score on the combined seven-point scale improve by at least a point. There is only one region of the world where the average level of freedom has declined, by almost half a point — again, the Middle East.

Some skeptics believe that democracy is largely a Western, Judeo-Christian phenomenon that is not well suited to other regions, cultures, and religious traditions. They have a ready answer for this freedom gap: Islam. I believe this answer is wrong on substantive grounds that I will come to shortly, but it is also questionable empirically. There are 43 countries in the world that pretty clearly have a Muslim majority. The 27 of these outside the Arab world have an average freedom score (5.04) appreciably better

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than the Arab states (5.81). A quarter (seven) of these 27 non-Arab, Muslim-majority states are democracies. Moreover, as Columbia University's Alfred Stepan has shown, non-Arab Muslim countries have some considerable cumulative experience over the past 30 years with political freedom.[4]

Democracy, then, exists in virtually all types of states. It is significantly present in almost every region of the world. It is present in countries evincing every major religious or philosophical tradition: Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, and Muslim. It is much more common in developed countries (all of the top 20 countries in human development are liberal democracies), but it is now significantly present among very poor countries as well. It is much more common — and much more liberal — in small states of under 1 million. But most of the biggest countries — specifically, eight of the 11 countries with populations over 100 million — are democracies.[5] By any category that is meaningful in the world today, there is only one set of countries that is completely undemocratic: the Arab world.

Democracy as a universal value?

THERE IS A POSSIBLE retort to this claim that democracy is present in virtually every major region of the world and thus is nearly a universal phenomenon. One could dismiss this as a fad, or a contemporary concession to international pressure: Democracy may exist today in far reaches of the globe, but only temporarily and superficially. It is not really valued by the people, and it will not last.

What about persistence? Forty years ago Seymour Martin Lipset argued that the richer the country the greater the chance that it would sustain democracy. In a seminal and methodologically sophisticated study, Adam Przeworski and his colleagues found that there was in fact a striking and monotonic relationship between development level and the probability of sustaining democracy. During the period 1950-90, the poorest democracies had a 12 percent chance of dying in any particular year, or an average life expectancy of eight years. Several third-wave democracies in their lowest income category have now outlived that expected life span, including Benin, Mali, Malawi, Mozambique, and Nepal.[6] Even among the poorest coun-

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[4]See the essay by Alfred Stepan forthcoming in the *Journal of Democracy* (July 2003).

[5]The democracies in this set are Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, and the United States. The nondemocracies are China, Pakistan, and Russia.

[6]Adam Przeworski, Michael E. Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well Being in the World, 1950-1990* (Cambridge University Press, 2000): 92-103.

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tries, there have been few breakdowns of democracy.

In fact, a strong case has been made that democracy is not an extravagance for the poor, but very nearly a necessity. Amartya Sen won the Nobel Prize for economics in 1998 in part for showing that democracies do not have famines. "People in economic need," he argues, "also need a political voice. Democracy is not a luxury that can await the arrival of general prosperity." Moreover, "there is very little evidence that poor people, given the choice, prefer to reject democracy."[7] He notes the vigor with which Indians defended their freedom and democracy in the 1977 election, tossing from office the prime minister, Indira Gandhi, who had suspended political and civil rights. But there have been countless other instances — from Burma and Bangladesh to Senegal and South Africa — where poor people have mobilized passionately for (and in defense of) democratic change. The fact that they have sometimes, as in Burma, been crushed by sheer force while a timid world watched and protested ineffectually does not negate the overwhelming expression of their sentiment.

The data show that the understanding and valuing of democracy is widely shared across cultures.

Fortunately, we also have more precise evidence from public opinion survey data as to what ordinary people really think. So far, the data show that the understanding and valuing of democracy is widely shared across cultures. Two-thirds of Africans surveyed (by the Afrobarometer poll in 12 mainly poor countries in 2001) associate democracy with civil liberties, popular sovereignty, or electoral choice. About two-thirds of Africans surveyed (69 percent) also say democracy is "always preferable" to authoritarian rule. The same proportion rejects one-party rule, and four in five reject military or one-man rule. Even many who are not satisfied with democracy believe it is the best form of government, and most Africans who live in democracies recognize there are serious institutional problems that must be addressed. Latin Americans — who have had more time than Africans to become disillusioned with how democracy actually performs in their countries — are more ambivalent; but overall, 57 percent still believe democracy is always preferable, and only about 15 percent might prefer an authoritarian regime. In East Asia, according to data from the East Asia Barometer collected in 2001, only a quarter in Taiwan and Korea, about a fifth in Hong Kong and the Philippines, but less than a tenth in Thailand believe that democracy is not really suitable for their country. In all five of these systems, consistently

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[7]Amartya Sen, "Democracy as a Universal Value," in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds., *The Global Divergence of Democracies* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

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strong majorities (usually upwards of two-thirds) reject authoritarian alternatives to democracy. So do strong majorities (about seven in 10 overall) in the 10 postcommunist countries now negotiating membership in the European Union.

Although much has been made of the "clash of civilizations," especially since September 11, 2001, the Afrobarometer survey evidence indicates that "Muslims are as supportive of democracy as non-Muslims." Large majorities of African Muslims as well as non-Muslims support democracy, and any hesitancy in supporting democracy among African Muslims "is due more to deficits of formal education and other attributes of modernization than to religious attachments," as the Afrobarometer's analysts put it. Data from Central Asia and the Middle East point in a similar direction.[8] The Middle Eastern data are somewhat dated (from the 1990s) and severely limited by what could be asked, but in two of the four country contexts (Egypt and Palestine), a majority attached at least some importance to the value of democracy. Weighing the evidence, political scientist Mark Tessler concludes, "Islam appears to have less influence on political attitudes than is frequently suggested." Indeed, "support for democracy is not necessarily lower among those individuals with the strongest Islamic attachments."

There is growing momentum among Muslim thinkers for a separation of mosque and state.

These popular orientations among the world's Muslims correspond with the thinking of increasingly outspoken moderate Muslim intellectuals, who are making the case either for a liberal interpretation of Islam or for a broader liberal view that deemphasizes the literal meaning of sacred Islamic texts while stressing the larger compatibility between the overall moral teachings of Islam and the nature of democracy as a system of government based on such principles as accountability, freedom of expression, and the rule of law. Islam is undergoing a kind of reformation now, and there is growing momentum among Muslim religious thinkers for a separation of mosque and state.

Significantly, Arab thinkers, scholars, and civil society activists are themselves challenging the democracy and freedom deficit that pervades the Arab world. The Arab authors of the *Arab Human Development Report* — an extraordinary document published by the UNDP last year — recognize that

[8] "Islam, Democracy, and Public Opinion in Africa," Afrobarometer Briefing Paper No. 3 (September 2002); Richard Rose, "How Muslims View Democracy: Evidence from Central Asia," *Journal of Democracy* (October 2002); Mark Tessler, "Islam and Democracy in the Middle East: The Impact of Religious Orientations on Attitudes Toward Democracy in Four Arab Countries," *Comparative Politics* (April 2002).

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the global wave of democratization "has barely reached the Arab states. This freedom deficit undermines human development and is one of the most painful manifestations of lagging political development." It was this same broad team of Arab specialists who wrote these words about the reform imperative:

> There can be no real prospects for reforming the system of governance, or for truly liberating human capabilities, in the absence of comprehensive political representation in effective legislatures based on free, honest, efficient and regular elections. If the people's preferences are to be properly expressed and their interests properly protected, governance must become truly representative and fully accountable.

Amartya Sen argues that the mark of a universal value is not that it has the consent of everyone, but that "people anywhere may have reason to see it as valuable." By this measure, there is growing evidence of all kinds that democracy is becoming a truly universal value.

Democracy drivers

To assess whether vastly more countries — and, someday, potentially *all* countries — can become democratic, we must answer four more questions. First, what has been driving democratization in the third wave? *Why* have so many more countries become democratic during this period? Second, why have so few of these new democracies broken down in the last quarter-century? Third, why do the remaining nondemocracies hold out? Logically, the answers to these questions will then provide essential insights with which to answer the most important question: Can the countries that are not now democratic become so? And how would they do that?

In this essay, I can only sketch the answers to these four questions, beginning with the causes of democratization.

Economic development. As Huntington notes, economic development has been a major driver of democratization in the third wave. However, increases in national wealth bring about pressures for democratization only to the extent that they generate several other intervening effects: rising levels of education; the creation of a complex and diverse middle class that is independent of the state; the development of a more pluralistic, active, and resourceful civil society; and, as a result of all of these changes, the emergence of a more questioning, assertive, pro-democratic political culture.

These broad societal transformations have accompanied economic development in a number of countries in recent decades. South Korea and Taiwan stand as the classic examples of economic growth bringing about diffuse social, economic, and cultural change that then generates diffuse societal pressure for democracy. At a somewhat lower level of economic develop-

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ment, this has also been the story of Thailand, Brazil, Mexico, and South Africa. However, where states have managed successfully to control and co-opt civil society and to manipulate cultural symbols and belief systems in a way that legitimizes semi-authoritarian rule, the internal pressure for democratization has been preempted or deflected. This has been the case with Malaysia and especially Singapore, the richest authoritarian state in the history of the world. Alternatively, some states that look economically developed in terms of their per capita income are much less so when we examine education levels, status of women, civic life, and state-society relations. These are the oil-rich states, whose economic and class structures are grossly distorted by the fact of centralized state control of the oil sector.

Economic development will, in most cases, generate powerful pressures for democracy.

Economic development that seeps broadly into the social structure and culture of a society will, in most cases, generate powerful pressures for democratization. The authoritarian rulers capable of managing this process of social and economic change as adeptly as Lee Kuan Yew and his successors in Singapore are few and far between. China's communist leaders think they can duplicate Lee's path, but they are wrong.

Economic performance. The second factor that has driven democratic change during the third wave has also been economic, but in the inverse direction of economic crisis, or poor governance performance in general. To the extent that they make an effort to justify their rule on moral and political grounds, conventional authoritarian regimes do so on the basis of performance achievements and imperatives. They claim that their rule is necessary to clean up corruption, fight subversion, unify the country, and/or generate economic growth. This puts authoritarian regimes in a dilemma. If they fail to deliver on these promises, authoritarian rulers forfeit their moral entitlement to rule. Unlike democracy, which people value intrinsically, these run-of-the-mill dictatorships have no other grounds on which to justify their rule except what they can tangibly deliver. Even if they succeed in overcoming the crises of political instability or insecurity that brought them to power, after some time people may feel they have served their purpose (perhaps at great cost to other values) and should go.

However one frames it, performance-based legitimacy is a delicate and perilous strategy for sustaining authoritarian rule indefinitely. Most authoritarian regimes are, in the long run, damned if they do deliver and damned if they don't. Those that care only about their own survival focus on funneling corrupt payoffs to a narrow support circle of cronies, functionaries, soldiers, and thugs who will repress any opposition. In this way, the regime may survive for some time, as in Iraq, while the country slowly crumbles.

International actions and pressures. The most distinctive feature of the

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third wave has been the sweeping change in the policies, actions, and expectations of the established democracies, particularly the United States, as well as regional and international organizations. Beginning under Jimmy Carter, with his new emphasis on human rights, and then, after a false start, continuing with the new emphasis on democracy promotion under Ronald Reagan, U.S. presidential administrations became active in pressing for democratic change. New U.S. institutions, such as the National Endowment for Democracy, were created to provide practical assistance and encouragement to democratic movements, civic organizations, interest groups, parties, and institutions. By the late 1990s, the United States was spending over half a billion dollars a year to foster and support democratic development abroad. Direct and indirect diplomatic pressure was exerted. With the end of the Cold War, these pressures widened, and a number of African states that had been pawns on a superpower chessboard were suddenly viewed on their own terms. Many African governments that had been lavishly financed and repeatedly bailed out from their misrule suddenly found themselves in acute fiscal crisis, and thus were forced to reform politically.

By the late 1990s, the U.S. was spending over half a billion dollars a year to foster democratic development abroad.

It was not just the United States that was pressing for democracy. The European Union became increasingly active and outspoken towards the same ends, particularly in its financial and organizational efforts to promote democracy in postcommunist Europe. The driving wedge of Western Europe's democratizing impact was a simple and unyielding condition that all states seeking entry into the European Union had to manifest, in the words of the European Community at the time, "truly democratic practices and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms." Much European Union technical and political assistance over the past 12 years has gone into helping the candidate states for entry meet these political (and other economic) conditions. First in Southern Europe and now in Central and Eastern Europe as well as Turkey, a regression away from democracy has become unthinkable because of the enormous economic and political costs it would impose through isolation from the community of European states and free trade. When we think about the prospects for democratic expansion in the world, this means by which the political will *for* democracy is generated and entrenched must be borne in mind.

More recently, regional pressure for democracy has begun to take hold in the Americas. In June 1991, the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted the "Santiago Commitment to Democracy," which required immediate consultation if a democracy is overthrown. Concerted action by the OAS and by the U.S. and other member states deterred a planned *autogolpe*

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in Guatemala in 1993 and a rumored military coup in Paraguay later in the decade. And the OAS effectively monitored transitional or controversial elections in a number of its emerging or transitional democratic states.

In fact, international election observation has become one of the most common means by which international actors — the United Nations, regional organizations, other governments, and NGOs — intrude, often by invitation, on the internal politics of sovereign countries. These kinds of political intrusions are reshaping the very idea of sovereignty, negating the longstanding presumption that states are free to do what they like within their own borders.

Changing international norms and conventions. Finally, then, what has changed during the third wave is the normative weight given to human rights — and to democracy *as* a human right — in international discourse, treaties, law, and collective actions. The world community is increasingly embracing a shared normative expectation that all states seeking international legitimacy should manifestly "govern with the consent of the governed" — in essence, a "right to democratic governance" is seen as a legal entitlement.[9] Already effectively implied by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, this right to democratic governance has been articulated more and more explicitly in the documents of regional organizations and affirmed by the growing number of interventions by those organizations and by the United Nations. In June 2000, 106 states, gathered in the "Toward a Community of Democracies" conference, agreed to "respect and uphold" a detailed list of "core democratic principles and practices" — including individual liberties, the rule of law enforced by an "independent and impartial judiciary," and "the right and civic duties of citizens to choose their representatives through regular, free and fair elections with universal and equal suffrage, open to multiple parties, conducted by secret ballot, monitored by independent electoral authorities, and free of fraud and intimidation."

The world community is embracing a shared normative expectation that all states should govern with the consent of the governed.

At a minimum, this evolution has done two things. First, it has lowered the political threshold for intervention, not only for the multilateral actors but for states and NGOs as well. Second, it has emboldened domestic advocates of democracy and human rights. No factor has been more important in

[9]See Thomas Franck, "The Emerging Right to Democratic Governance," *American Journal of International Law* (January 1992).

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driving and sustaining the third wave of democratization than this cluster of international normative and legal trends.

Fewer breakdowns

DRAWING FROM THE causal factors above, we can identify three factors that have provided a strong degree of immunity to democratic breakdown during the third wave. First, some countries became democracies after they had become relatively rich — in fact, richer than any country that has ever suffered a breakdown of democracy. Przeworski and his colleagues found that from 1950 to 1990, no country with a per capita income higher than $6,055 (in 1985 Purchasing Power Parity dollars) had ever suffered a breakdown of democracy. (This was the 1975 per capita income of Argentina, the richest country ever to have suffered a coup against democracy.) The equivalent level of economic development in 2000 dollars is $8,773. Taiwan and Korea became democracies at levels of economic development richer than this and are now much richer than this. Several democracies in Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America are also beyond this level.

The second factor is public opinion and normative change within countries. In many of the democracies that have emerged over the past two decades, citizens are broadly dissatisfied with the performance of the political system and distrustful of many of its institutions (especially parties and politicians). Yet they do not see an alternative to democracy. Even in Brazil, where active support for democracy stood at only 37 percent last year, people do not prefer authoritarian rule (only 15 percent could imagine wanting it). The alternative, rather, is apathy and withdrawal. This is bad for democracy, but not as bad as people actively clamoring for an authoritarian alternative. In the 10 postcommunist candidate states for EU accession, 61 percent are dissatisfied with the way democracy works in their country, according to the Centre for the Study of Public Policy's New Europe Barometer survey. Yet, overall, 72 percent would not approve of its suspension.

Belief in the legitimacy — the moral rightness — of a political system is always a relative judgment. In the past several decades, almost every form of nondemocratic government imaginable has been tried: absolute monarchy, personal dictatorship, military rule, colonial rule, fascism, communism, Ba'athism, the socialist one-party state, other forms of one-party rule, the Islamic Republic, pseudodemocracy, semidemocracy, and numerous other permutations. At an accelerating rate, people have opted for democracy. "As democracy has spread, its adherents have grown, not shrunk," Amartya Sen observes. Whatever their naïve assumptions at the beginning, people are sticking with democracy without illusions. They remember in their lifetime one or more of these other forms of rule, and they do not want to go back.

Of course it is possible that some new form of nondemocratic rule will be

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conjured up and capture the passions and imagination of some peoples; but at this point, more than a decade after the collapse of communism, there is no sign on the horizon of an antidemocratic ideology that could even begin to generate universal claims. Most likely, where authoritarian rule reasserts itself in the coming years, it will do so apologetically, wrapping itself in the moral purpose of democratic restoration and insisting — as General Pervez Musharraf did when he seized power in Pakistan in 1999 — that the suspension of democracy would be temporary. Or elected rulers will gradually whittle down the quality and competitiveness of democratic institutions. Or violent insurgencies will grind down the scope of their actual authority to the point where it is just very difficult to determine whether the country meets the minimal test of democracy.

The third factor suppressing potential reversions to authoritarian rule has been the unfavorable climate for such reversals at the regional and international levels. Most of all in Europe, but in Latin America as well, political and military leaders know that they will pay a high price in terms of economic and political standing within their regions if they reverse democracy. On specific occasions, some such leaders who have been tempted to reverse democracy — in Guatemala, in Paraguay, perhaps in Venezuela, and probably in Turkey — have been deterred from doing so by explicit interventions from neighboring countries and from the United States

But the international environment is a discordant one. There are conflicting signals and incentives. If we can create a more coherent and vigorous international environment supporting democracy and democratization, we can more effectively bolster the existing democracies against reversion while inducing more transitions to democracy, both gradual and rapid. That is the overriding challenge of the moment.

Holdouts

Several factors explain the tenacious resistance to the democratic trend on the part of roughly 70 countries. The least common explanation is authoritarian success. This can account for Singapore and Malaysia, and perhaps to some extent China with its recent rapid economic growth. But China remains a lower-middle-income country, and the SARS crisis is only the latest demonstration of the contradictions it confronts trying to sustain its phenomenal growth rates while the political system remains closed, corrupt, and unaccountable. Then there are the oil-rich states — the ones with staggering revenue and relatively small populations — which have been able to maintain authoritarian rule because they have had the wealth to buy off their peoples while lavishly financing structures of internal security and control. Even so, their peoples — in Kuwait, in Qatar, in Bahrain, and now in Saudi Arabia — are restive and want more self-determination. With the exceptions of Singapore, Malaysia, possibly for a

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while China, and these oil-rich states, there are no dictatorships in the world that survive today because they have brought prosperity to their people.

There are a few other holdout communist states in Asia (Vietnam, Laos, North Korea) and Cuba as well. Here, the insular, repressive logic of communist control persists. However, Vietnam is learning from China's model of economic opening, and what is true for China is true for these states as well. The more they open to the outside world in terms of trade, investment, foreign study, foreign travel, and all the other aspects of globalization, the more their people become exposed to education and global culture, the more the insular, repressive logic will weaken. At some unpredictable point, a regime crisis, an economic downturn, a split within the elite could ignite a transition to democracy. There is of course an alternative strategy to bring about regime change: Isolate them from the world. Make it hard for the regime. Then wait for it to collapse. We have tried this strategy for 40 years in Cuba, and all it has done is impoverish the people and entrench their repressive rulers. Precisely in order to generate the social and economic changes that will finally undermine communist rule in Cuba, we should lift the embargo and promote as much exchange and interaction with that country as possible.

We should lift the embargo and promote as much exchange and interaction with Cuba as possible.

Most dictatorships in the world survive for a simple reason. Their leaders enjoy having unchallenged power as well as having the ability that power confers to accumulate great personal wealth. It is just not possible to look at the evidence from the ground (and from the public opinion surveys) in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East and argue that their peoples don't mind living under dictatorship. Of course, no one could maintain that the majority of people in every country want a fully democratic system or that all peoples understand all the institutions of liberal democracy. But most people do want freedom. Given the choice, they would like to be able to constrain the arbitrary power of government, to replace bad and corrupt leaders, to have a predictable and secure life under some kind of just rule of law. When one assembles these basic political preferences, it begins to look an awful lot like democracy, even if the word may have different (or unsure) meanings in many places.

There is a lot of work to be done around the world to build the culture of democracy — the understanding of its rules, possibilities, obligations, and limits, the norms of tolerance, civility, participation, and mutual respect. Some of this cultural change happens with economic development, increasing education, and exposure to the global environment. Much of it can and should happen through deliberate programs of civic education and civil society construction. External democracy promotion programs and domestic

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civil society efforts have made some progress toward these goals. Much more remains to be done.

But the principal obstacle to the expansion of democracy in the world is not the people of the remaining authoritarian states. The problem is the ruling elites who have hijacked the structures of state power and barricaded themselves inside. As long as these rulers can corner a sufficient flow of resources to feed their apparatus of political predation and domination, they can survive.

That is where the international environment enters in. Predatory authoritarian regimes do not generate resources organically from within their own societies very well. Rather, they inhibit domestic investment, innovation, entrepreneurship, and hence economic growth by violating property rights and other individual freedoms. Such arbitrary rule also discourages foreign investment — except in the enclave economy of oil or other natural resource extraction. If predatory regimes do not have natural resources, they fall heavily in need of foreign loans and aid. This makes them vulnerable if the sources of those loans start insisting on responsible government.

The principal obstacle to the expansion of democracy in the world is not the people of the remaining authoritarian states.

For the most part, Arab states are rentier states, deriving their revenues mainly from oil or international aid flows rather than from taxes paid by their own people. But there has been another, entirely unique factor in their authoritarian survival. All of these dictatorships have been able to summon up a grand excuse for the failures and disappointments of their systems. First, it was the allegedly "colonial" existence of the state of Israel. For some it is still that, but now in particular it is the plight of the Palestinians and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Over the past several decades, this conflict has generated a heavy fog over Arab politics, diminishing political visibility and transparency. Arab governments have used it relentlessly to legitimate their rule — by stressing the authenticity of their commitment to something larger than themselves — and have relied on it more and more as the older forms of nationalism and pan-Arab solidarity have lost their luster. Much of the energy and emotion of Arab intellectuals and political activists has been drawn away from national political failings into protest over this larger political conflict. The debate about the true failings of Arab development — so eloquently expressed in last year's *Arab Human Development Report* — has been distorted and deflected by this powerful symbolic struggle over Arab identity and dignity.

Until the fog of this struggle is lifted — so that the peoples of the Arab world can see and debate more clearly the real nature of the obstacles to national progress, and so that radical Islamists will be deprived of one of

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their most emotive instruments for mobilizing political support — genuine and lasting democratization will be unlikely in the region.

What is to be done?

LENIN HAD A revolutionary agenda for global dictatorship. Some American leaders, such as Woodrow Wilson and Ronald Reagan, have also had a revolutionary global vision, but a vision of democracy. If the whole world is ever to become democratic, the most powerful democracy cannot be passive or timid (yet neither can it transform the world alone). We must craft a global strategy, asking Lenin's classic question: What is to be done?

First, with respect to the Arab world, we must relentlessly pursue a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the only broadly viable solution: the permanent coexistence and mutual recognition of two separate states, one an Israel that withdraws from most of its settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, the other an essentially demilitarized Palestine. Only the settlement of this conflict can strip Arab dictatorships of political cover for their abuses and free Arab societies to focus on the real sources of their misery and frustration.

Second, we need to open up the closed societies of the world. I do not propose to shower them with aid — far from it — but we should promote trade, travel, and exchanges of all kinds with countries like Cuba, Vietnam, Burma, and, yes, North Korea. The North Korean dictatorship is a house of cards resting on a tissue of lies. Its people, the most physically and intellectually isolated and totally brutalized of any in the world today, do not have a clue as to how the rest of the world lives. Once they find out, the regime will crumble, or else change very rapidly.

Third, we need a new deal in foreign aid and debt relief. Even after the end of the Cold War, even with the new standards and pressures on dictatorships, the resources to sustain them have largely continued to flow. Part of this has simply been inertia. Part of this has been the utterly perverse structural logic of aid agencies and especially the World Bank, whose officials are given portfolios of money to lend and projects to initiate with the understanding that their careers will suffer if they do not push the money out the door. Part of the reason has been fear that if we lean too heavily on weak, oppressive, rotten states, they will collapse altogether into new humanitarian emergencies. Instead, we dawdle and fund them while they disintegrate more slowly and millions of their people live shorter, nastier, more brutish lives because of abusive governance. Finally, part of the problem has been the conflicting priorities of bilateral donors (including the United States) that still want to maintain friendly client states around the world. Some thought this dualism — a polite word for hypocrisy — would come to an end with the demise of the Cold War. And indeed, it did subside for a time. But with

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the inception of the new war on terrorism since September 11, the problem of selling short our principles in order to nurture authoritarian clients has been reborn with a vengeance.

A new deal on aid would radically accelerate and institutionalize the tentative trends toward encouraging and expecting good governance in exchange for foreign aid. The Bush administration took an important step forward last year when it announced the creation of a Millennium Challenge Account, which will award a new $5 billion increment in development assistance (about a 50 percent increase over the current U.S. foreign aid budget) to a select number of low- and lower-middle-income countries that compete for it on the basis of three criteria: ruling justly (including democratically and accountably), investing in people, and promoting economic freedom. Hopefully, countries that qualify will start receiving substantial new sums of aid in the next year — if Congress allocates the funds.

Much of our foreign aid budget goes to countries ruled by corrupt, authoritarian regimes.

This is an important departure — indeed, a conceptual revolution — in foreign aid. But it does not go nearly far enough. First, we still need to question what we are doing with the rest of our foreign aid budget. Much of it goes to countries ruled by corrupt, authoritarian regimes. If that aid is delivered to and through civil society rather than the corrupt state itself, it may do some good. But too much is wasted, and there is too little effort to generate leverage for real political change. The big problem is the other donors: the World Bank, the regional development banks, the Japanese, and many of the European aid agencies.

Democratic change is possible in the world's remaining corrupt dictatorships, but it will require a radical manipulation of the incentives their leaders confront. They must know that the party is over, that they cannot any longer play one powerful donor off against another, or one country promoting its own oil industry over another.

This past January, the U.S. Agency for International Development released a report, *Foreign Aid in the National Interest* (available at www.usaid.gov), recommending a new set of strategies for our development assistance based on rewarding demonstrated performance and getting aid dollars into the hands of people in a given country who can do the most good with the money. These new directions, if adopted, could transform the international context in which dictatorships now maneuver to survive. In addition, a greater proportion of total U.S. foreign assistance should be devoted to political assistance to build democracy and improve the quality of governance. In truly intractable cases, helping to generate the demand for democracy and better governance by strengthening the capacity and reform understanding of independent organizations, interest groups, social move-

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ments, mass media, universities, and think tanks in civil society may be the main thing the United States can do to aid development. Whatever progress is made on governance will almost certainly have a positive impact on other sectors. Probably no other dimension of foreign assistance yields so many synergies.

The new strategy moves from the current exhausted approach of conditionality to a selectivity that rewards political freedom and accountability. As much as possible, rewards should be structured to lock into place the institutions and practices of democracy and good governance. As we seek to expand NAFTA into a Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, we should adopt a requirement similar to the European Union, that all members uphold democracy and human rights. In the case of debt relief for highly indebted poor countries, future relief should be granted only to countries that have demonstrated a basic commitment to good governance by allowing a free press and civil society, an independent judiciary, and a serious counter-corruption commission. Even in these cases, the debt should not be relieved in one fell swoop, but should be suspended and retired incrementally (for example, at 10 percent per year), generating ongoing incentives for adhering to good governance.

Debt relief should only be granted to countries that demonstrate a basic commitment to good governance.

If the United States and the other major bilateral and multilateral donors were to move together toward such a comprehensive strategy affirming democracy and good governance as the basis of development (and hence development assistance), they would generate very powerful new pressures for democratic reform. Not all authoritarian states would be affected immediately because not all of them depend on these flows of assistance. But the overall global climate would shift emphatically in favor of democratic change, generating potent demonstration effects even on the stand-pat regimes.

Of course, this would still leave open the question of *how* democratic change could be accomplished in countries that have never been democracies before. There is no one formula for getting to democracy or for structuring it institutionally so that it works reasonably well. Different countries need different sequences, strategies, and structures. In some cases, the transition to democracy could and should proceed fairly rapidly, since governance is such a mess and viable democratic forces wait in the wings. In other cases — including many of the Arab states — the transition to democracy will need to proceed more cautiously and incrementally.

Another distinctive feature of the Arab world is that the formal political arena has been closed to all but a relatively narrow circle of establishment parties and interest groups, while the chief alternatives (both above ground

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and below) to these co-opted forces have been Islamist parties and groups mobilizing a considerable network of affection and support, but with an anti-democratic agenda. The more moderate and pro-democratic groups — both Islamist and secular — have been squeezed between the iron fist of the state and the superior popular organization of illiberal Islam. If they are to be given a fair chance to compete in electoral politics, these moderates will need time to surface, organize, advocate, and campaign. While electoral competition for genuine national power is phased in over a period of years, an interim period of political liberalization must be used to build the independent structures of horizontal accountability — the judiciary, audit agency, counter-corruption commission, human rights commission, ombudsman, and electoral administration — that can ensure free and fair electoral competition and constrain whoever wins election in the new system.

The challenge in postwar Iraq will be unique. There, the state and political system must be thoroughly reconstructed at the same time as we rebuild an economy devastated by three major wars and decades of colossal misrule. The one thing we absolutely must not do is impose a leader or solution of our choosing. Iraqis — both those within the country and those returning from exile — must be given the time and space to meet in local groups, select representatives, and assemble a broad-based transitional government. Then they must begin to take responsibility for administering and rebuilding the country while organizing a smaller and more professional new army, debating and drafting a new constitution, then submitting it to a referendum, forming political parties and civic associations, constructing new independent media, electing new municipal and provincial governments, operating these new governments, and — only some years later — holding national elections for a new constitutional government. During this period of political reconstruction and nation-building, which will require a huge international peacekeeping force if it is to have any chance of success, some international authority will need to provide initial supervision of the process, gradually withdrawing as the Iraqi authority is able to assume greater and greater responsibility. The sooner that authority is internationalized in some way (in military terms, for example, through NATO), the longer it can stay in Iraq with some internal and international legitimacy.

Can it be done?

EVEN TO THINK of democratizing the entire world is a bold endeavor. Perhaps it is too bold. Certainly the above prescriptions are not without flaws. In the near term, we will probably fall short of the courage, imagination, and nerve truly to transform the global political climate. Part of this challenge is deeply political, even in terms of our own national debate. It is important to realize how the current war has further altered the international climate. Increasingly, the United States is seen as an

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imperial power, imposing its will largely unilaterally on the rest of the world. That may serve our short-term interests in any one conflict or dispute, but it will not facilitate our deeper, long-term interest in building a world of democracies and good governance. We cannot invade and conquer every dictatorship in the world. In fact, our national appetite for forcible regime change will probably be quickly exhausted in postwar Iraq. Unless we learn to work with and through international partners and institutions while seeking to energize, transform, and democratize global structures, our scope to effect further democratic change in the world will shrink.

Whatever may happen in Iraq, we will face sobering challenges of international terrorism, rotten governance, and big-power division. Our moral and political prestige in the world has suffered in the past few months, even as respect for our sheer military power has increased. If the whole world is to keep moving toward democracy, we must recover the former while preserving the latter. Ironically, we will find that we have much greater leverage to advance the cause of freedom in the world if we build and maintain effective partnerships with the other democracies of the world. We cannot always lead from the battleship or the bully pulpit. Sometimes, we must do so more softly and subtly, as part of a team.

We should also not take the existing democracies for granted. There is a new sobriety even among the democracies that are not performing well. People know the alternatives and do not like them. They still embrace democracy. But will they continue to do so a decade or two hence if a new generation — with no direct experience of the costs and illusions of authoritarian rule — finds itself without education, without jobs, without justice, and pretty much without hope? We can travel only so far on democracy as the least bad system. If it turns out to govern badly for a long period of time, some new alternative will eventually come along.

The fully global triumph of democracy is far from inevitable, yet it has never been more attainable. If we manage to sustain the process of global economic integration and growth while making freedom at least an important priority in our diplomacy, aid, and other international engagements, democracy will continue to expand in the world. History has proven that it is the best form of government. Gradually, more countries will become democratic while fewer revert to dictatorship. If we retain our power, reshape our strategy, and sustain our commitment, eventually — not in the next decade, but certainly by mid-century — every country in the world can be democratic.

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The U.S. and Russia After Iraq

By PAUL J. SAUNDERS

THOUGH PRESIDENTS GEORGE W. BUSH and Vladimir V. Putin continue to express their desire to work together after sharp differences over Iraq, their governments have not yet managed to do so in a meaningful way. The two leaders seem likely to try to overcome their differences at their first meeting since the war on June 1 in St. Petersburg. Yet, even after that meeting, the future of the U.S.-Russian relationship will be somewhat uncertain. Before the flare up over Iraq, the United States and Russia enjoyed what some have described as their best relationship since Russian independence. Despite disagreements over the American withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the second round of NATO enlargement, the strong personal connection between the two presidents and new cooperation in the war on terrorism had contributed to a sense of optimism that Washington and Moscow were finally on track to becoming real partners. As a result, Russia's assertive opposition to the U.S.-British war against Saddam Hussein came as a particular shock to many in the United States (and confirmed the suspicions of those who were not shocked) — and the impact has only been worsened by Moscow's thus-far obstructionist postwar conduct.

Paul J. Saunders is director of the Nixon Center.

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Yet the relationship remains one of considerable importance to American national interests. The Kremlin's cooperation in the war in Afghanistan — in sharing intelligence, stepping up its preexisting effort to arm the Northern Alliance, and setting aside earlier objections to a major U.S. military presence in the region — significantly aided U.S. forces in the field. And a strong and sustainable relationship with Moscow can serve important and even vital American interests in many other areas, ranging from the war on terrorism to non-proliferation and international trade and investment. Conversely, a weak relationship with Russia could embolden "rogue states" hostile to the United States, return the United Nations Security Council to its Cold War uselessness, and expose Americans to additional danger from terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

This raises two questions. What can be done to strengthen the U.S.-Russian relationship and put it on a more solid foundation? And, taking into account obvious and substantial differences with Moscow on some major international issues, how far can the relationship really go?

What went wrong?

Any discussion of improving the U.S.-Russian relationship should begin with an understanding of the status of the relationship today and analysis of "what went wrong" in American efforts to win Russian support for, or at least acquiescence to, the war in Iraq.

Unfortunately, even before Iraq, neither Washington nor Moscow was satisfied with the progress in the relationship. American officials frequently complained that in the absence of Kremlin involvement, Russian government departments routinely obstructed effective collaboration. Russian officials similarly grumbled that only the White House could force action from Cold War-era bureaucrats in the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency. Analysts and commentators in both countries lamented excessive reliance on the personal relationship between the two presidents.

Nevertheless, American and Russian officials continued to declare their commitment to building a strong U.S.-Russian relationship, and — despite reservations about the American use of force and concerns that Russia could face more terrorism after a war — Moscow initially seemed inclined to accommodate the United States on Iraq, where Russian economic and other interests were significant but not first-order concerns. After their meeting in St. Petersburg in November, Presidents Bush and Putin issued a joint statement essentially reiterating the message of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441 by calling on Iraq "to completely and immediately comply" with all relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions or "face serious consequences." Speaking to reporters, Putin expressed confidence that Russia and the United States could "achieve a positive result" so long as the process

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remained within the U.N. framework. As late as January 2003, senior officials suggested privately that Russia would be prepared to abstain in U.N. Security Council voting if a resolution were prepared that was sufficiently vague to allow for appropriate explanation to the Russian people, who were overwhelmingly opposed to an American use of force.

By February, however, the Russian position appeared to have hardened substantially. Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov repeatedly pronounced that Moscow would use its veto in the U.N. Security Council to block measures that "would open up the way, directly or indirectly, to settlement of the Iraqi problem through the use of force." Ultimately, of course, the Bush administration decided not to seek approval of yet another Security Council resolution on Iraq.

Both international and domestic forces drove the shift in the Russian position. Internationally, France (with help from Germany) made a very determined effort to seduce Moscow into opposing the United States, including intense communication with Russian leaders in advance of key Security Council deliberations. For example, in the 10 days prior to the February 14 report by chief weapons inspector Hans Blix, French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin met with his Russian counterpart Igor Ivanov on February 5, French President Jacques Chirac spoke to President Putin on the telephone on February 6, and Putin and Ivanov traveled to Paris for talks on February 10. President Bush spoke to Putin on the telephone on February 4, before the French diplomatic blitz, and on February 14, by which time Ivanov was already in New York for the Security Council session.

Similarly, in the crucial 10 days before the March 7 Blix report, de Villepin and Ivanov spoke by telephone at least every other day and met in Paris on March 5. German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer also spoke to Ivanov twice and participated in the Paris meeting. President Bush spoke to Putin on February 27 and late on March 6, but appeared to make little progress. Secretary of State Colin Powell met Ivanov only on the morning of March 7 and delivered a tough message that appeared to generate irritation and resentment on the Russian side rather than encourage support.

The French effort to court Moscow was especially successful because Paris made clear that it was prepared to take the lead role in opposing the United States. This strong position by an American NATO ally considerably eased Russian concerns about alienating Washington. The fact that Germany — which also currently holds a rotating Security Council seat and, despite tension with the Schröder government, had historically been a closer U.S. ally than France — was similarly firm in resistance contributed to Moscow's sense that it could stand up to the United States without rupturing the bilateral relationship and isolating itself from the West.

These developments occurred at a time when Russians had begun to look toward parliamentary elections, to take place in December, and to a presidential ballot in March 2004. Though President Putin does not currently

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appear to have any viable challengers for reelection, his domestic agenda depends heavily upon maintaining control of the Russian parliament, particularly its more significant lower house, the State Duma. According to a poll conducted by the respected All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) in late February and early March, 91 percent of the Russian public opposed the war and a considerable proportion expressed suspicion of U.S. intentions, while the Russian elite tended to dismiss the benefits of close relations with the United States. Putin could have paid a substantial political price for even tacit support of the American position, especially given the French and German positions. A defeat of the pro-presidential United Russia bloc by the Communist Party, which remains the largest parliamentary faction, could have sorely wounded Putin just three months before his own election day. Interestingly, a top Kremlin official visiting the United States in late February told a small group, including this author, that Moscow would have liked to support Washington on Iraq, but that the state of the bilateral relationship did not persuade Russian leaders that the U.S. would stand by them in dealing with the problems that war would create.

Finally, the Kremlin — like many governments and observers around the world — might have made a fundamental miscalculation of the likely course of the war in Iraq. Writing in the *Wall Street Journal* (April 15, 2003), Pavel Felgenhauer, perhaps the country's most respected media defense analyst, described Russia's lead intelligence agency, the Federal Security Service (FSB), as "a leading party of the pro-Saddam lobby," and Russian military officials routinely predicted a long, difficult, and bloody war in Iraq. Under the circumstances, top leaders could have believed that even if the United States launched military operations, it might still be persuaded to accept a diplomatic solution in the face of expected high casualties and increased domestic opposition to the war. In fact, prominent foreign policy commentators now admit that Moscow had very different expectations of the war; for example, leading Russian foreign affairs analyst Sergei Karaganov of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy wrote in *Moscow News* (April 23-29, 2003) that "our intelligence services misled us — or we deluded ourselves — about the Iraqis' ability and readiness to resist" U.S. forces. Notwithstanding his well-known pragmatism, President Putin may have been especially vulnerable to such self-deception as a result of his personal ties to the FSB and his close relationship to Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov.

What now?

As U.S. FORCES drew closer to Baghdad, President Putin made two widely publicized statements that appeared to demonstrate Russian interest in beginning to repair the damage to the U.S.-Russian relationship. Though he said that "nothing has changed in our position on Iraq," Putin stressed that a U.S. defeat was not in Russia's interest

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and gave a detailed list of reasons. He also said Moscow and Washington had to continue to work together on terrorism, non-proliferation, and other important issues. Domestically, the statements were a signal that, while the Russian president understood "the people who are unable to contain" their "emotions," the Russian media should scale back their vitriolic criticism of America and the war (something which in fact happened).

Nevertheless, the degree to which the Kremlin is prepared to work with the Bush administration remains uncertain. After initially rejecting the idea of writing off or rescheduling Iraqi debt, Russian Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aleksei Kudrin said that Russia could be willing to consider such moves in discussions in the Paris Club. (Aleksandr Shokhin, a Yeltsin-era economic official and former chairman of the State Duma's Finance and Credit Committee, was even more forthcoming, proposing that Iraq's debt to Moscow be reduced by 80 percent.) Yet Putin rejected lifting U.N. sanctions on Iraq in favor of a temporary suspension until U.N. inspectors confirm that the country does not possess weapons of mass destruction. And he lashed out at British Prime Minister Tony Blair after a meeting in Moscow that was supposed to patch up their relationship: "The question is, where is Saddam Hussein? Where are those weapons of mass destruction, if they were ever in existence? Is Saddam Hussein in a bunker sitting on cases containing weapons of mass destruction, preparing to blow the whole place up?" Though Russian officials seem increasingly inclined to work with Washington to end the sanctions, this statement, which could be interpreted as a gratuitous attempt to embarrass America's closest ally, was not reassuring.

Before the U.S.-Russian dispute over Iraq, many in Washington and Moscow had come to believe that Putin had made a strategic choice to pursue a closer relationship with the United States. Though Russian officials continue to express interest in strengthening ties with the U.S., neither Americans nor even Russians yet have a clear view of the Russian government's current intentions. For example, in an assessment of the lessons of Iraq for Russia, Sergei Karaganov complained that his country "lacked a coherent strategic objective" in its approach to the war:

> Did we want to preserve international legitimacy or save the U.N. Security Council or make friends with the Europeans and play them off against the United States or remain on good terms with the Americans? All of these objectives are justifiable if they are based on an underlying strategic line. There was no such line, however. This is not so much the problem of a particular crisis as of the entire foreign policy.

Karaganov is probably accurate to credit the personal bond between the two presidents with preserving the relationship through the Iraq crisis — but both sides had already recognized before Iraq that the Bush-Putin relationship per se was not a sufficient foundation for a close and lasting partnership. Moreover, it is hard to imagine that the personal relationship between

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the two leaders did not suffer as a result of Iraq. This raises the question of what other basis there is for the U.S.-Russian relationship both today and in the future.

Both before and after September 11, the Russian elite has generally derided the benefits of the U.S.-Russian relationship to their country. Today, even some analysts who have been generally well-disposed to the United States in the past see little value in President Putin's effort to strengthen ties with Washington; prominent television personality and commentator Alexei Pushkov — who earlier tended to support better relations with the U.S. — said recently in an interview that Russians should not be concerned about the consequences of the war in Iraq because Russia "didn't have anything to lose in its relations with the USA." Some American observers have also suggested that Russia has gained nothing.

This is wholly untrue. First and foremost, Russia gained considerably from the destruction of Afghanistan's Taliban regime. This also happened to be in the American interest, but it was a significant plus for Moscow, which had been unsuccessfully seeking U.S. cooperation against the Taliban for over three years. Russian officials were deeply concerned by the possible spread of Afghanistan's form of radical Islam into neighboring Central Asian republics — and by al Qaeda's direct support of Chechen rebel groups — and the Moscow-backed Northern Alliance had been losing ground in Afghanistan's ongoing civil war. American military action made a major contribution to addressing these problems and did so in a time frame that could not otherwise have been achieved. President Putin has publicly acknowledged the benefits to Russia of the U.S. war in Afghanistan.

Relatedly, the United States has come substantially closer to the Russian position on the war in Chechnya by acknowledging al Qaeda support for some of the Chechen rebels, officially designating three Chechen groups as terrorist organizations, and significantly muting criticism of Russian conduct in the region. On that last point, the American delegation to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights did not co-sponsor a critical resolution on Chechnya in the commission's March session in Geneva, as it has done in previous years with similar resolutions.[1] The Bush administration has also made a real and genuinely effective effort (in cooperation with U.S. allies in the Middle East) to cut off the flow of money to Chechen terrorists — something to which the Clinton administration more or less turned a blind eye despite numerous Russian requests. Taking into account that stabilizing Chechnya is Russia's No. 1 security interest, this is not a minor step. The U.S. has also pressed Georgia firmly to drive Chechen rebels from de

[1]The U.S. did vote in favor of the resolution, which did not pass, but its declining of co-sponsor status was a notable gesture to Moscow. The final vote was 15 for and 21 against, with 17 abstentions; Russia's new friends France and Germany each co-sponsored the resolution as well as voted in favor of it.

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facto sanctuary in its Pankisi Gorge region and to seal its border with Chechnya. Finally, the U.S. has generally supported Russia's controversial March referendum to approve a new constitution for the renegade province.

Third, the Bush administration has taken a much more relaxed view of Russian involvement in the former Soviet republics of Central Asia than the Clinton administration. This has included both an end to aggressive official efforts to find energy export routes to bypass Russia and an end to attempts to discourage regional governments from hosting Russian military bases. Again, considering that the region is high on Russia's list of strategic priorities, this is a meaningful acknowledgement of legitimate Russian interests.

This is not to say that there have not been disappointments. For example, Russian officials feel that their government has repeatedly been promised by the Clinton and Bush administrations (including in the immediate aftermath of September 11) that the Cold War-era Jackson-Vanik amendment would be repealed. For a variety of reasons, the U.S. Senate has not yet acted, though Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar submitted draft legislation to this end in March. This has been a continuing source of irritation, though Russia's ambassador to the United States, Yuri V. Ushakov, wrote in the *Washington Post* (April 3, 2003) that he considers the issue to be America's problem rather than his country's, as it is more a symbol of lingering Cold War sentiment in the United States than an obstacle to trade. Perhaps more seriously, Russian leaders were disturbed by the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and the second round of NATO enlargement, which included the three Baltic states. Neither issue would necessarily have been a significant problem in the context of an improving relationship, but both are added to the list of grievances in times of tension.

The Russian elite has generally derided the benefits of the U.S.-Russian relationship to their country.

From the U.S. perspective, Russia's insistence on completing United Nations weapons inspections in Iraq prior to removing sanctions on the country seems illogical, opportunistic, and possibly unfriendly. Taking into account Moscow's frequent past efforts to ease or lift the sanctions on Iraq — and its persistent assertions that the presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq was unproven — one would expect that Russia does not believe Baghdad had weapons of mass destruction. This would eliminate the need for sanctions, especially when the United States controls most of Iraq and when tens of thousands of American soldiers, rather than tens of inspectors, are looking everywhere for the weapons. The charitable interpretation of the Russian view is that it was an opening bargaining position in an effort to extract concessions; the less charitable interpretation is that it was intended to embarrass the United States. That would be a dangerous course for the

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Kremlin, which has much more to be embarrassed about, from Chechnya to its elections, its media, and its oligarchs (and oil-garchs).

The St. Petersburg summit meeting between Presidents Bush and Putin scheduled for June 1 will be an important indicator of Russian intentions. Russian officials are entitled to have different perspectives from their American counterparts and to express their views, but subjecting President Bush to the same treatment enjoyed by Prime Minister Blair will not improve the U.S.-Russian relationship. Conversely, meaningful manifestations of a desire to work constructively with Washington in Iraq and elsewhere would obviously be encouraging. Russian official reaction to Secretary Powell's May 14 meetings with President Putin and Foreign Minister Ivanov in Moscow provides grounds for cautious optimism about the summit.

What next?

Nevertheless, whatever the outcome of the June 1 meeting, it is difficult to see how the U.S.-Russian relationship can return entirely to pre-war business as usual — if for no other reason than the fact that the still overly important personal ties between Presidents Bush and Putin (and, for that matter, between Colin Powell and Igor Ivanov) must have a new element of tension that could emerge in future crises. Still, Russia's potential influence on important American interests necessitates an effort to move the relationship forward.

But because the advancement of U.S. interests — not friendly relations — is the paramount objective of this endeavor, it is essential to ensure that the relationship will indeed serve those interests. This is not self-evident in the wake of Russian conduct with respect to Iraq, and the Bush administration should make every effort to ensure that Russian officials understand that their active opposition to the war was a serious disappointment that could have real consequences.

President Bush and other American officials should explain to their counterparts during the summit, or in other appropriate venues, that the United States has been making a special effort to promote closer U.S.-Russian relations and that if Moscow is not prepared to reciprocate that effort, the U.S. will not continue it. This would mean being more outspoken about Russia's various failings to demonstrate that the Kremlin is hardly in a position to take the moral high ground. It could also include concrete steps, such as closer scrutiny of the conduct of Russian oligarchs eager to have their stocks listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Taking into account Russian business practices in recent years, virtually any large Russian firm could be subjected — quite legitimately — to attention from appropriate U.S. government agencies that would not help either the company in question or broader Russian efforts to reassure skittish foreign investors. Similarly, many of

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Russia's former government officials have commercial interests in the United States that could likely be complicated by a thorough look at their activities.

If Russian leaders appear committed to strengthening ties, Washington should be prepared to renew efforts to expand relations with Moscow. An urgent goal in any such efforts must be to build a solid foundation for a constructive and sustainable relationship with Russia. At the same time, the United States must establish its own priorities vis-à-vis Russia. As Iraq demonstrates, the foundation of the current U.S.-Russian relationship can sustain only a certain load. Washington should therefore work most aggressively to advance vital or very important interests in the relationship while seeking to avoid disputes over secondary or peripheral matters.

The key to deriving the maximum value from the U.S.-Russian relationship on a sustainable basis lies in structuring Russian choices by providing sufficient benefits through cooperation to outweigh the costs imposed by necessary and inevitable U.S. actions at variance with Russian preferences. This is not an abstract principle: Senior Russian officials made clear privately before the war that Moscow could have been less troublesome over Iraq in the context of a better relationship with Washington. Generating these benefits for Russia requires identifying areas of important convergent interests and pursuing them energetically while seeking creative solutions in areas where our interests are not inherently contradictory. Success should allow the United States to act independently (including in the face of Russian objections) when necessary without sacrificing the long-term advantages of a constructive relationship with Russia.

Three central issues — the war on terrorism, non-proliferation, and Russia's integration into the international economy — have the potential to offer significant mutual rewards to the United States and Russia and to serve as the foundation of a lasting relationship. Though there are many other areas of potential collaboration, these three offer immediately apparent and tangible benefits to both countries. Other issues, such as space cooperation, may be desirable but are insufficiently important to Washington or Moscow to serve as a basis for the U.S.-Russian relationship or to justify meaningful sacrifices by either government.

Terrorism

Establishing genuine counter-terrorism cooperation with Russia could make a significant contribution to U.S. interests. Pro forma discussions and lip service to intelligence-sharing will do little to save American lives — but establishing a real relationship with Russian intelligence agencies could. The Kremlin was interested in counter-terrorism cooperation, particularly with respect to extremist Islamic groups, long before September 11, and the unprecedented level of U.S.-Russian intelligence cooperation after September 11 did prove important to American opera-

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tions in Afghanistan. Moreover, unlike America, Russia never turned away from the unpleasant business of recruiting human agents in favor of high-tech intelligence gathering. And Russian intelligence agencies have considerably greater access to expertise on some key regions and — because of the Russian Federation's ethnic diversity — to individuals able to move freely in Middle Eastern and Central Asian societies. These capabilities could powerfully complement U.S. intelligence resources. For its part, Russia would likely welcome access to selected American satellite imagery and signals intelligence. According to some reports, Moscow relied on just one or two spy satellites for much of 2002 and had none in orbit during most of the war in Afghanistan.

Unlike some of America's "old Europe" allies, Russian officials are not squeamish about military action.

It is also conceivable that Russia could be an important U.S. partner in undertaking particular counter-terrorist operations. Unlike some of America's "old Europe" allies, Russian officials are not squeamish about military action. In many cases, Moscow will probably understand U.S. efforts to disrupt the operations of terrorist groups targeting American citizens and might even provide assistance under certain circumstances. The Kremlin has already essentially accepted the U.S. need to detain and interrogate al Qaeda terrorists; again in contrast to some West European governments, Moscow has been largely quiet about Guantanamo Bay.

Of course, U.S. and Russian concerns about terrorism are quite different. While Americans are troubled primarily by the danger of individual terrorist attacks targeting them at home and abroad, Russians worry that radical Islam could weaken neighboring states or even endanger their country's territorial integrity, which has already been threatened by Islamist terrorists in Chechnya. According to Maksim Yusin, writing in *Izvestia* (October 17, 2001), some 12 million Muslims reside in the Russian Federation; they are a majority of the population in seven regions (including Chechnya).

Terrorism, Islamic extremism, and drug trafficking (also of considerable concern to Russia) are particular problems in the region along Russia's southern frontier, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and South and Southwest Asia. Despite their differences over Iraq, the United States and Russia may be able to collaborate effectively in this region. Intelligence, financial, and other cooperation directed against drug trafficking, which often not only funds terrorist activity but also contributes to the lawless environment in which terrorist organizations thrive, could be especially productive. The two countries could also provide technical and economic assistance to regional governments to improve their border controls. Such joint projects would contribute directly to both American and Russian security by at least partially restricting the movements of terrorists; they would also likely be more

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palatable to some governments — particularly in Central Asia and the Caucasus — than strictly Russian assistance. Real U.S.-Russian partnership in the region could help to mitigate Russian concerns about American intentions there as well by demonstrably recognizing Russian interests in the region.

Proliferation

MEANINGFUL COLLABORATION with Russia to combat proliferation could substantially ease American efforts to keep weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of hostile states and groups. This goes far beyond securing Russia's "loose nukes" (and "loose brains"); many so-called rogue states and other would-be proliferators are former Soviet client states where Russia has experience, established contacts, unique sources of information, and political leverage. Effective U.S.-Russian cooperation in this area also denies hostile governments the option of working with or seeking protection from a disaffected Kremlin.

While joint efforts to account for and secure Russian nuclear materials must remain a focus of cooperative activity, Russia's increasing internal stability (and capability) should permit a much greater emphasis on worldwide U.S.-Russian non-proliferation work. The United States and Russia should first approach the other three states recognized as nuclear weapons states under the Non-Proliferation Treaty — Britain, France, and China — to launch a new dialogue on proliferation prevention and to share their joint experiences in securing Russia's nuclear materials. Then, as a group, the five states could approach others known to have nuclear weapons as well as those states that have developed or are developing nuclear reactors. Where appropriate, the group could delegate one or more to approach particular governments sensitive to the involvement of others among the five. An initial emphasis on dialogue and on accounting for and securing nuclear materials, which are relatively uncontroversial and of general interest, should also facilitate cooperation. The joint U.S.-Russian mission to remove some 45 kilograms of highly enriched uranium from Yugoslavia's Vinca Institute of Nuclear Sciences could also serve as a model for the group. Another possibility would be to attempt to establish an institutionalized mechanism for intelligence-sharing on non-proliferation matters. This could help substantially in coping with future proliferators by reducing disagreements about the facts, which have complicated discussions of North Korea and Iran with Russia, China, and others. If successful, this could reinvigorate the Nuclear Suppliers Group and enhance its effectiveness.

In time, this approach could be an important complement to the existing non-proliferation regime, which is in danger of collapsing due to thus-far ineffective responses to North Korea and Iran. By virtue of their parallel status as the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council,

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the nuclear five would have a considerable array of tools to deal with problem governments. Organizing an "N-5" would also create a format in which the U.S. and others could discuss and coordinate their legitimate nuclear assistance to other states. Given that the nuclear states' commercial interests sometimes contribute to others' concerns (e.g., in Iran) or complicate solutions (as in dealing with North Korea, where Moscow resents having been excluded from the commercial opportunities of the 1994 Framework Agreement), this could make a real difference.

A strictly U.S.-Russian dialogue on nuclear-weapons modernization — something each government is now evaluating — could serve both countries' interests while contributing importantly to transparency and trust. Expanded joint training for U.S. and Russian military forces and emergency workers in managing the disastrous consequences of an attack using weapons of mass destruction could also be useful.

The international economy

The United States has an important interest in Russia's integration into the international economy, as it will likely contribute to political stability and moderate foreign policy conduct by improving economic conditions in the country and creating a Russian domestic lobby favoring peaceful cooperation with the country's neighbors and partners. America has obvious commercial interests in Russia's large marketplace as well, in addition to a long-term strategic interest in access to Russia's energy resources.

Though many Russians remain concerned about possible foreign control of key firms and the threat of foreign competition to struggling sectors of their economy, most have come to realize the essential importance of competing in the international economy. The major debate is now over whether Russia should immediately seek membership in the World Trade Organization or, alternatively, delay its entry to give Russian enterprises more time to prepare for global competition.

Putin, in his April 18, 2002 state of the nation address, sought to persuade the uncertain plurality of Russians with the pragmatic argument that "the WTO is a tool. Those who know how to use it become stronger. Those who don't know how, or don't want to use it or learn how to, those who prefer to sit behind the palisade of protectionist quotas and tariffs, they are doomed." The Bush administration has appropriately offered to work with Russia to accelerate its WTO accession, as well as in taking legal and administrative steps in the United States to facilitate trade with Russia, such as classifying Russia as a market economy, which has been done, and repealing the Jackson-Vanik amendment to the Trade Act of 1974, which still requires congressional action. The two countries have also established a Russian-American Business Dialogue to make recommendations to the two

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governments to promote the development of economic ties.

Yet the U.S. could do considerably more. Little creativity is required here; institutions such as the Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation exist for precisely this purpose and could expand their activities. Of course, access for U.S. firms remains a key concern as well; economic cooperation will be limited until the Kremlin forces open Russian markets in key industries, which could require standing up to Russia's powerful oligarchs. Washington should be prepared to be tough in ensuring a level playing field for American firms and should not hesitate to use the leverage provided by the Export-Import Bank and other relevant agencies when appropriate. If the Russian government is successful in limiting protectionist impulses, several sectors of the Russian economy seem promising for American investment, including (in addition to energy) software design and development and telecommunications. Now that a land code has been passed allowing foreign firms to hold long-term leases on farmland, Russia's agricultural sector also may be of interest.

Russian oil and gas

ENERGY COOPERATION could be especially important to the economic relationship between Russia and the United States. First and foremost, Russia's considerable energy resources could provide an important new source of oil and gas both to the U.S. as a country and to American energy companies, which must constantly acquire new oil and gas fields to replace those depleted. At the same time, Russia could become an important market for energy-related goods and services, such as specialized equipment, construction, and engineering.

Despite initial enthusiasm about investment opportunities in the energy sector in Russia and Central Asia, the past decade has, with a few exceptions, been disappointing for interested U.S. firms. The lack of legislation on production-sharing agreements (PSAs, strongly resisted by Russian firms) significantly limited or delayed American participation in many projects, as did general legal concerns and other problems. Foreign investors also faced considerable suspicion from Russian officials and a skeptical public, both leery of ceding control of Russia's patrimony to outsiders.

However, recent developments suggest that attitudes may be changing. The Russian government is reportedly formulating a new energy strategy that will allow foreign companies to have "complete economic control" in certain areas. BP's $6.75 billion purchase of a substantial share of the Russian oil firm TNK earlier this year — which includes management control of the firm for BP — is a sign of new willingness to deal on the part of both foreign investors and Russian regulators and firms (though not long after the deal, the State Duma gave preliminary approval to a bill that may effectively kill PSAs). At the same time, the Kremlin has largely dropped its opposition

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to the Baku-Ceyhan export route for oil from the Caspian Basin, and major Russian firms have expressed interest in participating in the project.

In parallel, American interest in Russia's energy sector has rebounded since September 11, which encouraged U.S. officials and executives alike to seek alternative sources of oil beyond the volatile Middle East. Though some commentators have even suggested that America should seek an energy security alliance with Moscow in order to replace Saudi Arabia with Russia as the top supplier and to encourage Russia to act as a "swing producer" to stabilize prices, Russia today cannot fulfill such a role. Unlike Saudi Arabia's, a considerable share of Russia's output is used domestically or cannot be exported due to limited infrastructure. Also, high transport costs discourage sales of Russian oil in distant markets like America. And Russia faces significant environmental constraints in responding to rapidly changing market conditions; many Russian oil wells cannot be turned off in hard times because of harsh weather conditions.

Yet Russia does have both a demonstrated ability to undercut OPEC's power over the world oil market and, unlike many OPEC countries, a sufficiently diversified economy that important sectors suffer when domestic oil prices are too high. Furthermore, at least for the time being, major Russian oil companies seem increasingly interested in doing business with the United States. Russia's largest producer, Lukoil, purchased Getty Petroleum Marketing in 2000 for $71 million to obtain its 1,300 U.S. gas stations; Yukos, the second largest producer, has gone to extraordinary lengths to sell its oil in America, including complex arrangements to load and unload a supertanker at sea using numerous smaller vessels. Both firms are now members of a consortium seeking to build a $4 billion pipeline to Russia's northern port of Murmansk specifically to facilitate oil shipments to the U.S. east coast. Finally, while Russia's oil sector usually receives more attention, the country's natural gas reserves are also quite important, accounting for some 40 percent of global reserves. With its own gas supplies dwindling, the United States could become a major consumer of Russian gas in 10 to 20 years, according to some analyses.

What are the limits?

THERE ARE, OF COURSE, very real limits to the development of U.S.-Russian relations. The dispute over Iraq has demonstrated clearly that Washington and Moscow have different perspectives on major problems in the international system and the appropriate means for resolving them and that these different perspectives can preclude effective cooperation that advances American interests. North Korea and Iran — which raise similar but far from identical issues — may well draw further attention to the limits of the relationship. The fact that the stakes could be higher in these two cases than in Iraq (which was further from possessing

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nuclear weapons than either Tehran or particularly Pyongyang) only increases the urgency of expanding the horizons of U.S.-Russian ties.

The United States needs less from Russia vis-à-vis North Korea than it does from China, which has a considerably longer border with the North (and probably more leverage over it), or from South Korea and Japan, which Pyongyang most threatens. Yet Russian efforts to persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons and weapons programs — and active cooperation in isolating Pyongyang until it does so — would be constructive. At a minimum, Moscow's denial of political and other support would limit North Korea's options.

U.S.-Russian differences on North Korea are primarily over facts and tactics rather than objectives. Russian leaders have made clear that they view a nuclear-armed North Korea as a dangerous strategic problem; however, they generally dismiss American assertions that Pyongyang already has one or two nuclear weapons. Even in private meetings, senior officials have argued that North Korea could at worst be a source of nuclear material for "dirty bombs" — though they also admit that Moscow has little information on Pyongyang's nuclear programs. This relatively low assessment of the threat drives Russia's strongly held position that the problem should be resolved strictly through diplomacy.

Russia's interests in Iran are more significant and harder to reconcile with American goals.

Though it has little at stake in North Korea today, Moscow is unlikely to support either military action or economic sanctions against Pyongyang in the absence of clear evidence that the North possesses nuclear weapons. Russian officials see North Korean claims about the weapons as bravado but worry (like China, Japan, and South Korea) that backing the weak regime into a corner could have unpredictable and dangerous consequences for the region. Moscow's principal diplomatic initiative has essentially been to propose renewed North Korean adherence to the 1994 Framework Agreement in return for economic assistance and a nonaggression pact with the United States. Russia has also suggested six-way talks involving North and South Korea, the United States, Russia, China, and Japan. The talks were rejected by the North (which wanted direct talks with the United States) and by the U.S. (which was not prepared to talk at the time).

Washington could attempt to engage the Kremlin more actively in dealing with North Korea's top leadership. President Putin has met Kim Jong-Il several times and seems to have some (admittedly limited) influence with Pyongyang, though Russia's real leverage will probably remain unknown until tested. At a minimum, Putin may be sufficiently trusted by Kim to be credible in explaining the potential consequences of continued recalcitrance

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by the North. Other forms of cooperation could also be effective: According to some reports, Moscow permitted the United States to install nuclear detection equipment in its embassy in North Korea during the 1990s.[2] Needless to say, substantially engaging the Russian government would require sharing both the burdens and the benefits of any potential resolution. Russia is likely to remain vigorously opposed to military action, particularly in the aftermath of the war in Iraq.

On Iran, a certain end to Russian-Iranian cooperation that could contribute to Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons technologies would be highly desirable to the United States, as would Russian pressure on Iran to cease attempts to develop the weapons and access to Russian intelligence about Iran's nuclear efforts.

Although the United States has less ambitious objectives with respect to Iran than it had in Iraq — focused more squarely on proliferation and less complicated by thoughts of forcibly removing Tehran's government — Russia's interests there are more significant and harder to reconcile with American goals. Unlike Iraq or North Korea, Iran is viewed in Moscow as both a responsible neighbor and a reliable partner. As a neighbor, Iran has made little or no effort to promote either its theocratic governance or its brand of Islam in Central Asia. In fact, Tehran was an important ally of Moscow in supporting the Northern Alliance against the Taliban and aided Russian efforts to end the civil war in Tajikistan. Most important, Iran did not offer or permit its citizens to offer meaningful support to Chechnya's Islamist rebels.

Iran is also important to Russia as a commercial partner. Bilateral trade has reached approximately $1 billion per year, with an additional $300 million to $400 million per year in arms sales expected during the next few years.[3] Iran is also increasingly purchasing Russian oil through oil-swap arrangements that supply refineries in northern Iran and free oil from southern fields for export. Moreover, unlike Iraq, Iran has paid its obligations promptly.

Russian leaders profess to understand U.S. concerns in Iran and even admit privately that Tehran may be attempting to develop nuclear weapons. But the Russian government denies providing assistance to this effort, asserting that its cooperation with Iran has focused strictly on the nuclear reactor

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[2]James Risen, "Threats and Responses: Weapons Monitoring; Russia Helped U.S. on Nuclear Spying Inside North Korea," *New York Times* (January 20, 2003). Moscow promptly denied the reports, though it would be expected to do so whether or not the information was true.

[3]"Russia, Iran Discuss Security, Non-Proliferation, Export Control," ITAR-TASS (April 5, 2002); Susan B. Glasser, "Russia, Iran Renew Alliance Meant to Boost Arms Trade; Tehran Seeking Advanced Technology; U.S. is Concerned," *Washington Post* (March 13, 2001).

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at Bushehr, which is subject to monitoring by the IAEA. Russian officials also insist that all spent fuel from the reactor will be returned to their country to prevent Iran from using it to develop a fuel-cycle capability and point out that the United States agreed in 1994 to provide similar technology to North Korea. With respect to Iran's missile development, Russian officials insist that they have generally reined in the scientific institutes and private firms that have helped Tehran and that enforcement will continue to improve.

Though President Putin was reportedly more open to discussions on Iran during Colin Powell's May trip, Russia is unlikely to terminate its assistance to the Bushehr project. Aside from being a source of obvious economic benefits, the project is also viewed as a means through which Moscow can both monitor Iran's technological progress and exert modest leverage in other areas of interest. Still, the Kremlin may be willing to further tighten its arrangement with Tehran and to crack down more firmly on unofficial assistance to Iran's missile programs. This latter effort is unlikely to be wholly successful in the absence of considerably greater work on the "supply side," that is, in finding alternatives for the Russian organizations and individuals that could be tempted to help Iran.[4]

Washington could consider pressing for greater intelligence cooperation with respect to Iran's nuclear work. The Kremlin should be more forthcoming with its own intelligence on Iran if Russian leaders want to reassure Americans with respect to Moscow's role. Nevertheless, Iran will likely remain a problem in the U.S.-Russian relationship until its behavior changes. Washington should expect Russia to resist U.S. attempts to pressure Tehran or limit the Russian-Iranian relationship.

Working together

RUSSIAN ELITE AND public suspicion of U.S. motives and resentment of U.S. conduct are also a brake on progress in the relationship. For example, when asked in a May 2002 VCIOM poll to identify those factors that "[push] Russia and the United States apart," Russians surveyed gave the following as their top four responses: "high-handed attitude of Americans to other countries and people" (38 percent); "striving by American authorities to widen power and control over the world" (36 percent); "refusal by American authorities to consider the interests of other countries" (32 percent); and "U.S. tries to defend its interests

[4]Valentin Tikhonov's study, "Russia's Nuclear and Missile Complex: The Human Factor in Proliferation," published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in 2001, compellingly documents the desperate state of specialists in Russia's nuclear and missile cities and the pressures they face to find supplementary work or emigrate.

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with a 'big stick,' i.e. troops, bombing, etc." (26 percent). After the war in Iraq, these views are likely even more widely held.

However, Washington can reassure Russians by showing greater sensitivity to Russian concerns and by avoiding peripheral actions that antagonize Russia without advancing important U.S. interests. A November 2002 meeting between Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Marc Grossman and the foreign ministers of the GUUAM states (Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Moldova — a group of former Soviet republics that have banded together in part against Russia) in New York and a U.S. announcement of $50 million in aid to the organization served no end that could not have been easily achieved in bilateral talks with the five states without irritating the Russian government in an area of much greater significance to Moscow than Washington.

More frequent and more comprehensive consultations with Moscow in advance of important American policy initiatives would also be constructive. Such an effort would give Russian officials — and the Russian public — a sense that the Bush administration considers Moscow to be a player in international affairs, even a partner, and views Russian perspectives as significant. For example, notwithstanding the failure of talks on modifying the ABM Treaty, the administration was successful in preparing the Kremlin for President Bush's announcement of the U.S. intent to withdraw from the treaty. This helped the Russian government to manage domestic concerns.

The United States does have the options of ignoring Russia or giving it much less priority among a multitude of foreign policy goals. But such an approach would have its own costs and could undermine important American objectives, most notably in fighting terrorism and proliferation, but also in rebuilding Afghanistan and Iraq, pursuing peace in the Middle East, and using the U.N. Security Council to advance U.S. interests.

Genuine partnership with Moscow will not be easy in the face of differing perspectives, priorities, and cultures. The legacy of the Cold War — nostalgia in Russia and a sense of rectitude and invincibility in the United States — also complicates the relationship, as does Russia's still-imperfect democracy. But the rewards of success could be considerable.

What is essential for the United States is to develop a strategy for the U.S.-Russian relationship that maximizes Russia's contributions as an American partner while managing inevitable disagreements — in part by ensuring that they do not exceed Moscow's gains from partnership with Washington. Though there is considerable asymmetry between American and Russian capabilities, Russia has made and can make a real difference in many circumstances, especially if U.S. ties with some traditional allies are further strained. In a complex and dangerous world, Russia can be an important friend. Pursuing such a partnership is worth the effort.

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Biotech and Baby Food

By Henry I. Miller and Gregory Conko

Warnings about one societal danger or another often portray children as the likeliest or most susceptible victims. As is the case with so many other public health false alarms, the attack on the new biotechnology — also known as bioengineering, gene splicing, or genetic engineering — is less about real concern for children's health than about environmental activists' willingness to exploit children's issues for their own benefit. Biotechnology has been the target of scare campaigns since the technique was first demonstrated in 1973. Activists, like Jeremy Rifkin of the Foundation on Economic Trends, have been warning against the supposed dangers of biotechnology for three decades, calling it "the most radical, uncontrolled experiment we've ever seen" and even likening it to "Nazi eugenics." Others have claimed that gene-spliced crop plants are "worse than nuclear weapons or radioactive wastes." Fortunately, the American public has not taken such arguments seriously.

Henry I. Miller, M.D. is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, and author of Policy Controversy in Biotechnology: An Insider's View *(R.G. Landes, 1997). Gregory Conko is director of food safety policy at the Competitive Enterprise Institute.*

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The first biotechnology-derived medical treatment, human insulin, was commercialized in 1982, and the first biotech plant in 1994. During the past two decades, thousands of new medicines, foods, and industrial products have been produced with the aid of modern biotechnology and sold to doctors, farmers, manufacturers, and consumers. So powerful is the technology that literally tens of millions of lives worldwide have been protected, enriched, and even lengthened due entirely to these techniques. But so subtle and precise are the production changes generated by the technology that very few people recognize how widely biotechnology figures in everyday life.

Indeed, it was not until the late 1990s that activist scare campaigns began to gain traction. The earliest successes were in several Western European countries, where environmentalists capitalized on recent food scares — primarily the concern about Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, or "Mad Cow Disease" — to frighten consumers about what seemed to be another mysterious threat in the food supply. But no similarly frightening affliction has beset the U.S. food supply in decades, so Americans have not been so easily scared away from the technology. However, environmental activists may have found the right approach for their U.S. audience in the time-tested tactic of capitalizing on parents' concern about the health of their children.

Tens of millions of lives worldwide have been protected, enriched, and lengthened.

In 1998, the environmental activist group Greenpeace began a campaign aimed at frightening baby-food producers away from using biotech-derived ingredients in their products. Prior efforts had failed to scare Americans away from agricultural applications of biotechnology, but Greenpeace had significantly better luck with this new approach. The ploy had worked wonders in Europe earlier that year as part of a broader campaign. In that case, Greenpeace activists simply asked, in a letter to executives of the Swiss baby-food line Galactina, whether their products contained biotech ingredients. Galactina's parent company, the pharmaceutical giant Novartis, buckled under even that minimal pressure literally overnight, promising to remove certain existing products from grocery store shelves and to reject biotechnology in future production. Naturally, when Greenpeace targeted Gerber Foods, the U.S. baby-food brand also owned by Novartis, it expected a similar result — and got it.

In May 1999, Greenpeace activist Charles Margulis faxed a letter to Gerber headquarters in Freemont, Michigan, demanding to know whether Gerber used gene-spliced products in its baby food and inquiring about any steps Gerber was taking to make sure that no gene-spliced ingredients were used. Earlier that year, a spurious environmental issue had been raised when the journal *Nature* published a brief report suggesting that certain gene-

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spliced corn varieties could have a negative impact on Monarch butterflies. The report had been picked up and grossly exaggerated by the popular media and, in any case, was later discredited. No substantial public concern about the safety of biotechnology for humans was elicited, but the damage was done. Gerber had learned that even unwarranted scares could command substantial media attention, and by July, the company caved in to Greenpeace's threat.

Gerber representatives tried to make clear that the company did not believe biotechnology to be dangerous in any way. But competition in the food industry is intense, and profit margins tend to be very small. Thus, were it to embrace biotechnology, Gerber believed it could suffer from the kind of negative publicity that would likely result from a Greenpeace-led campaign against the company. Gerber announced plans not only to drop gene-spliced ingredients from its products, but also to try to use only organic ingredients in the future.

Gerber learned that even unwarranted scares could command substantial media attention.

Unaware of the successful campaign against Gerber's Swiss counterpart, Galactina, American supporters of biotechnology were shocked by the company's announcement that it would relinquish biotechnology. After all, Novartis, parent company to both product lines, was also one of the world's largest producers of gene-spliced plant seeds, so the decision by two Novartis divisions to forgo one of their parent company's most important products cast a pall over the entire biotechnology industry. Almost immediately, two other baby-food producers, Pittsburgh-based H.J. Heinz Company and Healthy Time Natural Foods of Poway, California, announced that they too would be making similar changes in their products, and another major baby-food producer, St. Louis-based Beech-Nut Nutrition Corporation, announced that it too was eschewing biotech ingredients.

The damage this campaign has done to food producers' confidence in their decisions to use biotechnology-derived ingredients, versus going "biotech free," has been tremendous. Soon after, Pepsico-owned Frito Lay, one of the largest U.S. manufacturers of snack foods, told its corn suppliers that it would no longer purchase gene-spliced corn varieties for use in corn or tortilla chips. And both McDonald's and Burger King informed their suppliers that they would not purchase gene-spliced potato varieties for making french fries. Even alcoholic beverage producers Seagram's, Kirin, and Sapporo have sworn off gene-spliced varieties for their products. Thus, environmental activists have begun to accomplish indirectly what they could not achieve by targeting consumers directly.

These decisions are, in the long run, anti-consumer. They reduce con-

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sumer choice and possibly even the safety of the food products. Biotechnology enhances product safety not only by its greater precision, but also by exploiting the subtleties of plant pathology. A good example is a gene-spliced corn variety engineered to kill certain insect pests (which can also minimally affect some non-pest insects, including butterflies), but which is harmless to humans and other mammals. As it fends off the insects, the gene-spliced corn also reduces the levels of Fusarium, a toxic fungus often carried into the plants by the pests. This, in turn, reduces the levels of fumonisin, a potent and dangerous fungal toxin that can lead to fatal diseases in horses and swine that ingest infected corn and can also cause esophageal cancer in humans. Thus, using the gene-spliced corn for food processing lowers the probability that harmful levels of fumonisin will be found in the harvested kernels.

Fortunately, a broad-scale disavowal of biotechnology by the food industry has not ensued, but an important, natural ally of the biotechnology industry has been publicly neutralized. Caught between the threats of activists and the desire to use superior technology to enhance their products, major food producers are clearly reluctant to put their brand reputation at risk — especially in the face of a campaign aimed at worrying parents about the safety of their children. They are only too aware of the lengths to which activists will go in the name of protest: They have destroyed crops undergoing field trials, vandalized laboratories and greenhouses, and even set fire to research offices at Michigan State University.

Many branded food products have developed a long-standing and well-deserved reputation for quality and safety. But it's also that reputation that should make the food industry inclined to defend gene-spliced agricultural products. The benefits of biotechnology for food processors, in terms of reduced prices and better product attributes, can be substantial. More important, however, food biotechnology has the potential to make foods safer and more nutritious. Thus, by scaring food processors away from food biotechnology, the anti-biotech "kid campaign" could well have a real and negative effect on the future of this important technology. Its loss could actually make our children worse off, not better.

How safe is biotechnology?

ALTHOUGH MOST AMERICANS have not succumbed to the ideological scare-mongering campaign against biotechnology, they cannot avoid hearing over and over about the supposed threats to children's health. Increasingly, some Americans are beginning to view gene-spliced foods with more than a little skepticism. Of course, those who are critical of biotechnology are often unaware of an important, fundamental point: The modification of organisms at the basic genetic level is not new, and consumers, farmers, and industries all have extensive — and positive —

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experience with it. Even the term "biotechnology" was once used in a much broader sense, to describe any application of biological organisms to technical or industrial processes. A primitive form of food biotechnology dates back at least to 6000 BC when the Babylonians used microorganisms in fermentation to brew alcoholic beverages. Only in recent years has biotechnology come to connote only the most sophisticated methods for modifying organisms at the genetic level.

During the course of the twentieth century, a better understanding of genes and cell biology added to the improvement of all manner of organisms. An excellent example is the genetic modification of *Penicillium chrysogenum*, the mold that produces penicillin. Using a variety of techniques, the mold has been altered to produce more and more penicillin, and yields have increased more than a hundredfold in the past five decades. Similarly, agricultural crops have been genetically improved with astonishing success with both "natural" and "unnatural" breeding techniques. These applications of older biotechnologies represent scientific, technological, commercial, and humanitarian successes of monumental proportions. The "conventional" genetic modification of wheat plants was recognized in 1970 when the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Dr. Norman Borlaug, the "Father of the Green Revolution."

However, the techniques used for these earlier successes were relatively crude and recently have been supplemented, and in many cases supplanted, by modern biotechnology. The techniques described by practitioners as gene splicing, genetic engineering, or recombinant DNA engineering use a variety of tools to identify single genes from one organism, isolate and remove them from the surrounding DNA, and then insert them into the DNA strands of other organisms. Because the DNA in every living organism is made up of the same basic chemicals — and because DNA works in essentially the same way whether it's in a bacterium, a plant, or an animal — a gene can be moved from one organism to another and still produce the same trait. And the products of modern biotechnology can be used for a variety of purposes — including modified bacteria for cleaning up oil spills; a weakened virus used as a vaccine; a protein, such as insulin, used to treat diabetics; or a crop plant modified to need less pesticides or to be more nutritious.

Dozens of scientific bodies, including the UK's Royal Society, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, the World Health Organization, and the American Medical Association, have studied modern biotechnology and gene-spliced organisms and arrived at remarkably congruent conclusions about their safety:

- Modern genetic modification techniques are an extension, or refinement, of earlier, far less precise ones;
- Simply adding genes to plants or microorganisms does not make them less safe either for the environment or for humans;

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- The risks associated with gene-spliced organisms are the same in kind as those associated with conventionally modified organisms (and in both cases are usually extremely low); and
- Regulation of the products of genetic modification should be based upon the risk-related characteristics of individual products, regardless of whether newer techniques are used in their development.

Thus, the primary thing that has changed since the introduction of gene-splicing methods in the early 1970s is the *technology* of biotechnology. The new technology, however, is more precise and predictable than its predecessors and yields better-characterized and more predictable products. There are already more than 100 gene-spliced medicines on the market and more than 300 more in clinical development. Marketed products include human insulin, used daily by millions of American diabetics; tissue plasminogen activator, a protein that dissolves the blood clots that cause heart attacks and strokes; human growth hormone, used to treat children with hormonal deficiency; erythropoietin, which stimulates the growth of red blood cells in certain patients suffering from anemia and is especially beneficial to cancer patients who have undergone chemotherapy; and several interferons, proteins used to treat a variety of maladies from multiple sclerosis to viral infections and cancer.

This reality of current therapeutics, along with the vast potential of biotechnology to produce new and better medicines, presents such a powerful argument for the medicinal use of biotechnology that it has been difficult for anti-technology activists to challenge it. Scare campaigns have instead typically focused on attacking agricultural applications of biotechnology. But gene-spliced plants have also shown many important benefits for both farmers and consumers, as well as for the environment.

Dozens of gene-spliced crop and garden plants now on the market have been genetically improved with a range of new traits, including resistance to insect pests and plant diseases. Gene-spliced varieties of insect-resistant corn and cotton have been modified to produce a protein that is toxic to certain chewing insects but not to birds, fish, or mammals, including humans. In turn, they require fewer applications of synthetic pesticides and generate higher yields. Gene-spliced varieties of soybean and canola that are resistant to one or another herbicide allow farmers to spray less and still control weeds effectively. Because this eliminates the need for mechanical cultivation to remove weeds, herbicide-tolerant crop plants protect topsoil from eroding easily, which has been a major agricultural and environmental concern for decades. And biotech-derived growth hormones for livestock, like cows and pigs, can help farmers produce more meat and milk at a lower price and with less nitrogen and phosphorous waste from the animals.

One such hormone, recombinant bovine somatotropin (rbST), or bovine growth hormone, has been a target of activists for nearly two decades. The Food and Drug Administration approved the product in 1993 to boost milk

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production in cows after more than 10 years of intensive scrutiny (although, years earlier, the agency had approved the analogous human hormone for use in growth-hormone-deficient children after a mere 18 months of review). But scaremongers have often claimed that administration of the hormone to cows was potentially hazardous to consumers of the milk — causing, for example, immune deficiencies in children. One activist, Samuel Epstein of the Cancer Prevention Coalition, has charged that drinking milk from cows given rbST will cause an increase in childhood cancers — even though milk from treated cows is chemically indistinguishable from other milk.

But scientific evidence doesn't seem to matter. Activists have targeted schools, day care centers, and even the coffee retail chain Starbucks for boycotts and petition campaigns calling for the end of rbST use, in spite of endorsements for the product by such esteemed scientific bodies as the American Medical Association, the American Cancer Society, the National Institutes of Health, and the United Nations World Health Organization and Food and Agricultural Organization.

The adoption of rbST by U.S. farmers in the face of such antagonism has been remarkable. But it demonstrates an important correlation that exists between citizens' well-being and government policies that encourage product innovation. Farmers use rbST, which increases the productivity of their cows roughly 10 percent to 25 percent. This, in turn, enables them to produce the same amount of milk with fewer expenditures, making the farmers better off and reducing the retail price for consumers. Ultimately, if government agencies were to keep the regulation of research and development only to the level that is necessary and sufficient, the quest for profits would stimulate researchers' and industry's interest in making more products like rbST.

Health risks for children?

DESPITE THE OVERWHELMING scientific consensus that biotechnology methods pose no inherent risks, critics still argue that splicing genes into plants can cause all sorts of human health risks, including the addition of new phytochemical toxins or allergens into the food supply. The allergy issue is of special concern when children are involved, because children tend to be more sensitive to allergens than adults. According to the National Institutes of Health, approximately 5 percent to 8 percent of children have a true allergy to certain types of foods, but only 1 percent to 2 percent of adults do. So, if biotechnology really did increase the risk of introducing new allergens into the food supply, this might pose a genuine children's health issue. But is this a real possibility?

Food allergies are a reaction of the body's immune system to a substance or an ingredient in a food, usually a protein. And, because the function of most genes is to provide the cellular blueprint for making proteins, it has

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been easy for activists to convince the uninformed that a real children's health scare is imminent. But the issue is not so simple. Both conventional and biotech plant breeding involves the introduction of new genes into established crop plants. Thus, they both pose a risk of introducing potentially harmful proteins and other substances into the food supply, some of which could be allergens or toxins. But it is important to remember that the risk for both types of breeding is generally quite small. Furthermore, the level of risk an individual plant variety will pose — either to human health or to the environment — has nothing to do with how it was developed; it has solely to do with the characteristics of the plant that is being modified, the specific gene or genes that are added, and the local environment into which it is being introduced. In short, the fact that biotechnology was used to introduce a new gene into a crop plant has no bearing on whether or not new allergy issues could arise. Indeed, with biotechnology, breeders are actually less likely to introduce new allergens into the food supply. Why?

The level of risk an individual plant will pose has nothing to do with how it was developed.

Conventional plant breeding involves an essentially random mix of literally tens of thousands of genes from two or more parent plants — any one of which may never before have been part of the human food supply. Thus, plant breeders generally have little knowledge about which genes combine to create new crop varieties, which gene products are expressed (and at what levels), or which traits may be generated or altered. Dozens of new plant varieties produced through imprecise hybridization and other traditional methods of genetic improvement enter the marketplace each year without any scientific review or special labeling. Many such products are from "wide crosses," hybridizations in which large, sometimes huge, numbers of genes are moved from one species or one genus to another to create a plant variety that does not and cannot exist in nature. For example, *Triticum agropyrotriticum* is a relatively new man-made "species" that resulted from combining genes from bread wheat and a grass sometimes called quackgrass or couchgrass. Possessing all the chromosomes of wheat and one extra whole genome from the quackgrass, *T. agropyrotriticum* has been independently produced in the former Soviet Union, Canada, the United States, France, Germany, and China and is grown for both animal feed and human food. One might envision various problems arising from such a genetic construction, which introduces tens of thousands of foreign genes into an established plant variety. For example, the new genes could increase the invasiveness (or weediness) of the plant in fields, or proteins derived from the quackgrass genes could be toxic or allergenic to consumers. However, neither regulators nor activists have evinced any concern about these possibilities. Instead of focusing regu-

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latory attention on such risk-related issues, they have concentrated solely on gene-spliced plants, about which plant biologists and breeders invariably know considerably more. They know, for example, exactly which new genes are being added into an existing plant line, and they know what proteins those genes will help create. Often they even know the precise sequence of the DNA segments that have been inserted.

An analysis of gene-splicing techniques published by the U.S. National Research Council in 1989 concluded:

> [Gene-splicing] methodology makes it possible to introduce pieces of DNA, consisting of either single or multiple genes, that can be defined in function and even in nucleotide sequence. With classical techniques of gene transfer, a variable number of genes can be transferred, the number depending on the mechanism of transfer; but predicting the precise number or the traits that have been transferred is difficult, and we cannot always predict the [characteristics] that will result. With organisms modified by molecular methods, we are in a better, if not perfect, position to predict the [characteristics].

Why, then, are genetic constructions crafted with the older, less precise techniques exempt from regulation from the dirt to the dinner plate? Why don't regulatory regimes require that new genetic variants made with older techniques be evaluated for increased weediness or invasiveness, or for new allergens that could show up in food? The answer is based on millennia of experience with genetically improved (but pre-gene splicing) crop plants: Even the use of relatively crude and unpredictable genetic techniques for the improvement of crops and microorganisms poses minimal risk to human health or the environment. Regulators in the United States and many other countries have found that post-marketing regulation of food largely through surveillance of the marketplace is sufficient to assure food safety. Equally important, it permits plant breeders, food processors, and manufacturers to offer consumers a vast array of constantly improving, varied, tasty, and inexpensive foods.

Paradoxically, only the more precisely crafted, gene-spliced crops are exhaustively, repeatedly, and expensively reviewed before they can enter the field or food supply. If those supposedly concerned about risk were crafting regulatory approaches logically, the balance of scientific certainty and uncertainty would dictate that greater precaution apply not to gene splicing but to the cruder, less precise, less predictable "conventional" forms of genetic modification. Instead, regulators and their supporters — including anti-biotech activists — have chosen to set the burden of proof far higher for the products of gene splicing.

Potentially even more important, one of the most noteworthy potential advantages of biotechnology is actually to eliminate existing allergens from foods like peanuts, wheat, and milk by "silencing," or turning off, the genes that generate allergenic proteins. Professor Steve Taylor, a noted allergen

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researcher at the University of Nebraska, says that, "in the long term, we will have foods that are less hazardous because biotechnology will have eliminated or diminished their allergenicity."

Safer and healthier kids

Aside from the very promising possibility of making "allergy free" foods, there are plenty of other important health benefits that food biotechnology holds in store. One good example is the addition of vitamins, minerals, and essential amino acids into staples, such as grain crops, that have little micronutrient value. Another is the ongoing research into developing vegetables with higher levels of potentially beneficial micronutrients. Varieties of soybean and canola, which have been modified with modern biotechnology to produce healthier cooking oils with less saturated fat, are even now being grown on tens of thousands of acres in the United States and Canada.

Even more important are the nutritional benefits gene-spliced plants could deliver to people in less developed nations. For example, the diet of more than 200 million children worldwide includes inadequate levels of many important micronutrients such as vitamin A. In Asia, this is often caused by the weaning of poor children on little more than rice gruel. Deficiency in this single micronutrient can result in impaired intellectual development, blindness, and even death; each year, approximately 2 million children die from a severe lack of vitamin A. Fortunately, a substantial amount of research into improving the nutritional value of staple crops is well underway. Perhaps the most promising recent advance in this area is the development of a rice variety that has been genetically enhanced to add beta carotene into the edible grains, which is then converted in the human body to vitamin A. It is estimated that by boosting the availability of vitamin A in developing-world diets, this variety, called Golden Rice, could help prevent as many as a million deaths per year and eliminate numerous other health problems. A similar modification to increase iron content is also under active investigation.

And there are many other ways in which biotechnology can help poor women and children, who perform much of the daily farm work in less developed countries. One approach is to enhance the ability of many kinds of crop plants to grow in poor soils, a problem that reduces cereal crop productivity over vast areas of the earth, but primarily in the poorer nations of the tropical zone. Adding genes to rice and corn that enable the plants to tolerate high concentrations of aluminum in the soil is the goal of a team of scientists in Mexico. Other researchers, at the University of Toronto and the University of California at Davis, are creating crop varieties that can be irrigated with poor quality, brackish water. And there are many similar examples of crop modifications, such as improving the ability of plants to grow in alkaline, iron-poor soil, that could have direct and

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substantial benefits for poor farmers.

Gene splicing can also address the monumental need in less developed countries for both new childhood vaccines and cheaper versions of existing vaccines. The latter can be achieved by lowering production costs and/or reducing the cost of immunization — for example, by eliminating the need for refrigeration or developing oral vaccines that do not require a needle and syringe. Gene-spliced plants are already being developed that contain edible vaccines against many infectious scourges rampant in developing nations, including hepatitis B and various diarrheal diseases.

Even currently marketed gene-spliced products, such as the pest-resistant cotton so popular in the United States, have permitted farmers in less developed nations such as South Africa and China to reduce their dependence on synthetic pesticides. Cotton farming uses very large doses of pesticides, and in less developed nations those pesticides are typically sprayed on crops by hand. This is often labor-intensive and expensive. In addition, in China, for example, some 400 to 500 farm workers die every year from acute pesticide poisoning, and approximately 50,000, many of them women and children, have suffered serious illnesses since 1987, attributed to on-farm contact with pesticides. But the introduction of gene-spliced, pest-resistant cotton varieties in China has reduced pesticide poisonings by nearly 80 percent among growers of the biotech varieties.

Gene splicing can address the need in less developed countries for new and cheaper childhood vaccines.

While plant geneticists are working to engineer many useful traits into crop plants, some of the benefits of biotechnology will be wholly unanticipated. Consider again the pest-resistant corn example described above. That gene-spliced variety has been found to reduce considerably the levels of harmful fumonisin toxins in harvested grains, an important, although poorly appreciated, health benefit. In industrialized countries like the United States and Canada, strict processing standards and sophisticated testing methods keep the amounts of fumonisin in food well below dangerous levels. But in poorer regions of the world, where corn is usually grown in small plots by single families who consume most or all of the produce, such quality control is nonexistent.

In 1990 and 1991, the number of babies born in and around the south Texas town of Brownsville with an extraordinarily rare condition called anencephaly — in which the brain of the newborn infant is stunted or missing — rose to double the normal rate, then returned to normal the following year. The condition was found primarily among the children of poor Mexican immigrant mothers, who tend to consume very large amounts of corn every day in tortillas alone. After initially suspecting industrial pollu-

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tants as the culprit, the Texas Department of Health now blames the near-epidemic on exceptionally high fumonisin levels in corn caused by a multi-year drought in northern Mexico and the southwestern United States. Similar examples undoubtedly occur without documentation throughout the world. But biotech products like pest-resistant corn could be an important way to reduce the incidence of such heart-rending problems.

Even such desperately needed biotech products as these do not escape the activist scare campaigns. When the United States Agency for International Development sent a shipment of corn and soy meal to aid the victims of a cyclone in the Indian province of Orissa, anti-technology activists took samples of the food to test whether or not it contained gene-spliced varieties. When they found that it did, Vandana Shiva, director of the New Delhi-based Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology, an environmental activist group, argued, "The U.S. has been using the Orissa victims as guinea pigs for [gene-spliced] products" — even though these were the very same biotech corn and soy varieties that U.S. consumers had been eating for years.

To biotechnology critics like the *New York Times Magazine* food journalist Michael Pollan, Golden Rice is just a "Great Yellow Hype" — a ploy by multinational biotechnology corporations to get the world hooked on gene splicing. Never mind that the research was funded primarily by the New York-based Rockefeller Foundation, which has promised to make the rice available to developing-world farmers at little or no cost. Ismail Serageldin, director of the UN-sponsored Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, asks biotech opponents, "Do you want 2 to 3 million children a year to go blind and 1 million to die of vitamin A deficiency, just because you object to the way golden rice was created?" Apparently, in their opposition to biotechnology, critics find it more important to use children as a symbol than actually to make the world a safer or healthier place for kids.

Bitter fruits

In spite of significant and real — not merely conjectural — benefits of gene-spliced foods, the anti-biotechnology "kid campaign" has borne fruit for environmentalists in a way that other forms of activism could not. Whether the campaign will ever succeed in frightening large numbers of American consumers away from biotech is yet to be seen. It is, however, likely to exacerbate the tendency of governments to over-regulate modern genetic technologies. The activists need not scare consumers or food processors completely to succeed in destroying biotechnology. They could be successful simply by weakening public support just enough to provoke unnecessary and poorly conceived legislation or regulation.

Already, most regulatory agencies have treated gene-spliced foods and crop plants in a discriminatory, unnecessarily burdensome way. They have

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imposed costly and time-consuming requirements that could not possibly be met for conventionally bred plants. Agricultural biotechnology research and development have become so expensive that research on developing countries' subsistence crops — millet, cassava, sorghum, yams, and the like — has almost evaporated. Research on tropical rice varieties has continued only courtesy of huge subsidies from governments and charities, such as the Rockefeller Foundation. Adding still more regulation could turn gene splicing into a kind of boutique technology that is applied primarily to high-value products that are affordable only by the affluent. The biggest losers would be the inhabitants of less developed countries and lower-income consumers everywhere else. Thus, the safe and effective products of this technology, which hold so much promise for improving the health of children, could be stripped from their hands by a campaign perversely designed to exploit them for political gain.

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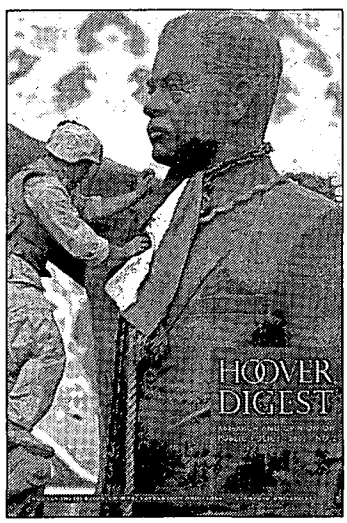

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Peacekeepers, Inc.

By P.W. Singer

Violence breaks out in a small African state. The local government collapses and reports emerge that civilians are being massacred by the tens of thousands. Refugees stream out in pitiable columns. As scenes reminiscent of the Rwanda genocide are played out on the world's television screens once again, pressure mounts to do something. The U.N.'s calls for action fall on deaf ears. In the U.S., the leadership remains busy with the war on terrorism and Iraq and decides that the political risks of doing nothing are far lower than the risks of losing any American soldiers' lives in what is essentially a mission of charity. Other nations follow its lead, and none are willing to risk their own troops. As the international community dithers, innocent men, women, and children die by the hour.

It is at this point that a private company steps forward with a novel offer. Using its own hired troops, the firm will establish protected safe havens where civilians can take refuge and receive assistance from international aid agencies. Thousands of lives might be saved. All the company asks is a check for $150 million.

What would the international community do when faced with such a choice? Would it allow peacekeeping to become a profit-making exercise? Or would it choose to spurn the firm's offer, but at the risk of lives on the ground? It is certainly a fascinating dilemma, but one that sounds almost too implausible to consider seriously. It is not.

Peter Warren Singer is an Olin fellow in the Foreign Policy Studies Program at the Brookings Institution and coordinator of the Brookings Project on U.S. Policy Towards the Islamic World. He is the author of Corporate Warriors *(Cornell University Press, 2003).*

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A number of states are balanced precariously on the brink of a descent into chaos (Burundi, Congo, and Zimbabwe, to name just a few). And, despite a decade of swerving from crisis to crisis, the world appears in no better a position to respond if they do. The ultimate problem is that the U.N. remains a voluntary organization of states. Its peacekeeping options are thus dependent on the enthusiasm of its members to send their own troops into harm's way. In areas outside their spheres of influence, this is ever less present, in particular among the developed states whose militaries are best prepared to do a good job. The same problem holds true for regional organizations, which are often weakest in the areas of the world where they are needed most. Sometimes, coalitions can be built to respond to crises, but they require time, cohesion, and a willingness and capability to intervene that may not always be there. Thus, when state failure or chaos occurs, often no one answers the call. Even when peacekeeping forces are available, the units are often slow and cumbersome to deploy, poorly trained, underequipped, lacking in motivation, or operating under a flawed mandate.

When state failure or chaos occurs, often no one answers the call.

At the same time, there is growing global trade in private military services for hire, better known as the privatized military industry. These companies range from small consulting firms, formed by retired generals, to transnational corporations that offer battalions of commandos for hire. Often operating out of public sight, such firms have been players in a number of conflicts over the past decade, ranging from Angola to what was Zaire. Even the U.S. military has become one of the prime clients of the industry, with private firms now providing the logistics of every major U.S. military deployment, maintaining such strategic weapons systems as the B-2 stealth bomber and Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicle, and taking over the ROTC programs in over 200 American universities. Indeed, from 1994 to 2002, the U.S. Defense Department entered into over 3,000 contracts with U.S.-based military firms, estimated at a value of more than $300 billion. Their role in supporting the Iraq war will only see these numbers grow.

As a result, over the past several years, many have begun to call for a twenty-first-century business solution to the world's twenty-first-century security problems. If everything from prisons to welfare has been privatized, why not try turning peacekeeping over to the private market? Proponents of exploring this idea obviously include the companies who stand to profit from it. But they have also expanded well beyond, to include not only the British government, which just issued a "Green Paper" exploring the issue, but also many traditional supporters of U.N. peacekeeping, including even former U.N. Under Secretary Sir Brian Urquart, who is considered the founding father of peacekeeping. As a U.N. officer summed up his feelings

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on the firms in an interview with the *Ottawa Citizen* (April 6, 1998), "In a perfect world we don't need them or want them. But the world isn't perfect." Privatized peacekeeping offers both promise and peril, and the time has come for the international community to face up to some hard choices — before the next disaster forces an even worse dilemma.

The privatized military industry

GIVEN THE FACT that few have even heard of it, the privatized military industry is a surprisingly big business. It has several hundred companies, operating in over 100 countries on six continents, and over $100 billion in annual global revenue. In fact, with the recent purchase of MPRI (a Virginia-based military advisory company) by the *Fortune* 500 firm L-3, many Americans already own slices of the industry in their 401(k)s. In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the industry was one of the few to rise in stock valuation rather than plummet. The reason is that the attacks essentially lodged a "security tax" on the economy, from which the private military industry stands to benefit.

The industry began its boom roughly a decade ago. The opening of a market for private military services was the result of a synergy between three powerful forces. The immediate catalyst was a massive disruption in the supply and demand of capable military forces since the end of the Cold War. Not only did global military downsizing create a new labor pool of over 6 million recently retired soldiers, but at the same time there was an increase in violent, but less strategically significant, conflicts around the world. With the great powers less willing to intervene or prop up local allies, the outcome was a gap in the market of security, which private firms found themselves able to fill.

At the same time, massive transformations are underway in the nature of warfare. While small-arms simplification and proliferation has increased the ability of minor warring groups to disrupt entire societies, creating even greater demand, warfare has also become more technological at its highest levels. As the vast array of military contractor support in the Iraq war illustrated, the most modern forces are more reliant than ever on civilian specialists to run increasingly sophisticated military systems.

Finally, the past few decades have been characterized by a normative shift towards the marketization of the former public sphere. The successes of privatization programs and outsourcing strategies have given the market-based solution not only the stamp of legitimacy, but also the push to privatize any function that can be done outside government. The past decade, for example, was marked by the cumulative externalization of a number of functions that were once among the nation-state's defining characteristics, including schools, welfare programs, prisons, and defense manufacturers. In fact, the parallel to military service outsourcing is already manifest in the domestic

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security market, where in states as diverse as Britain, Germany, the Philippines, Russia, and the United States, the number of private security forces and the size of their budgets greatly exceed those of public law-enforcement agencies. In short, this newest outsourcing industry drew precedents, models, and justifications from the wider "privatization revolution."

In a parallel to the wider outsourcing industry, there are three primary business sectors in the privatized military industry, with the firms distinguished by the range of services that they offer. Military provider firms, also known as private military companies or PMCs, offer services at the forefront of the battlespace. That is, their employees engage in actual fighting. Military consultant firms provide combat and strategic advisory and training services. Military support firms, akin to supply chain management firms, provide rear-echelon services, such as logistics, technical support, and transportation.

The barriers to acquiring military strength are lower, making power more fungible than ever.

The industry's growth means that almost any military capability can now be hired off the global market. After they receive contracts from clients, who range from state governments and multinational corporations to humanitarian aid groups and even some suspected terrorist groups, the firms recruit military specialists to fill them. They find their employees through formal job announcements in trade journals and through informal alumni networks of elite units. The vast majority are recently retired, meaning that the cost of training is borne elsewhere, an added savings. Where once the creation of a military force required huge investments in both time and resources, today the entire spectrum of conventional forces can be obtained in a matter of weeks, if not days. The barriers to acquiring military strength are thus lowered, making power more fungible than ever. In other words, clients can undertake operations, which they would not be able to do otherwise, simply by writing a check.

This is not just a flight of fancy, but has actually already come to fruition in a number of cases. For instance, the armies in the West African ECOWAS organization all lack certain specializations, such as air support and logistics, that are critical for effective intervention operations. Nonetheless, due to the facilitation of firms such as International Charters, Inc. (ICI) of Oregon, the organization's forces were able to intervene in the Liberian war in the early 1990s. Using a mix of former U.S. special forces and Soviet Red Army veterans, the firm provided the assault and transport helicopters that supplied the regional force and deployed it into combat. In fact, when the capital, Monrovia, was overrun by rebels and the firm's helicopters were destroyed at the airport base, ICI's personnel retreated to the American embassy and helped defend it from being burned down. Similarly, in 1998, Ethiopia

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leased a wing of the latest Su-27 jet fighters (roughly equivalent to F-15s) from the Russian firm Sukhoi — along with the pilots to fly them, the technicians to maintain them, and the mission planners to direct them. This private air force helped Ethiopia win its war with neighboring Eritrea.

Peacekeeping possibilities

WITHIN THE PEACEKEEPING sphere, the military consulting and support industry sectors have already made inroads (one example being firms providing certain national contingents in the East Timor operation with logistics support). However, the idea of military provider firms replacing blue helmet troops on the ground is one of the most controversial proposals to emerge from the industry's growth. Proponents believe that such outsourcing of peacekeeping will increase both the effectiveness and efficiency of peace operations. In contrast to the U.N.'s tin-cup dependence on whatever forces its members choose to donate, private firms could target their recruiting at more capable personnel and scour the markets for the best equipment. The firms also would lack the procedural hang-ups that hamper international organizations; they are less threatened by the internal tensions that plague multinational forces and can take quicker and more decisive action. In short, private companies might be able to do peacekeeping faster, better, and cheaper.

The contrasting experiences in Sierra Leone between the military provider firm Executive Outcomes and the U.N.'s peacekeeping operation are the most often cited example of privatization's promise. In 1995, the Sierra Leone government was near defeat from the RUF, a nefarious rebel group whose habit of chopping off the arms of civilians as a terror tactic made it one of the most truly evil groups of the late twentieth century. Supported by multinational mining interests, the government hired the private military firm, made up of veterans from the South African apartheid regime's elite forces, to help rescue it. Deploying a battalion-sized unit of assault infantry (numbering in the low hundreds), who were supported by firm-manned combat helicopters, light artillery, and a few armored vehicles, Executive Outcomes was able to defeat the RUF in a span of weeks. Its victory brought enough stability to allow Sierra Leone to hold its first election in over a decade. After its contract termination, however, the war restarted. In 1999 the U.N. was sent in. Despite having a budget and personnel size nearly 20 times that of the private firm, the U.N. force took several years of operations, and a rescue by the British military, to come close to the same results.

There are three potential scenarios for the privatization of peacekeeping forces. The first is privatized protection. The problem of security for relief operations is widespread and pervasive. In fact, more Red Cross workers were killed in action in the 1990s than U.S. Army personnel. Thus, while the ability of humanitarian actors to create a consensual environment them-

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selves is severely limited, military provider firms might be able to provide site and convoy protection to aid groups. This would allow much more effective aid actions in areas where the local government has collapsed. Besides the direct benefit to the workers on the ground, better protection might also prevent local insurgents from gaining control of supplies and lessen the pressure on outside governments to become involved in messy situations, including scenarios like the 1992 Somalia operation. Humanitarian organizations still operating in dangerous places such as Mogadishu already contract for protection with local warlords, so the more formal business alternative might be preferable. In fact, this scenario is not all that unlikely, given that several U.N. agencies already use such firms to provide security for their own offices.

When a genocide or humanitarian crisis occurs, the intervention itself might be turned over to private firms.

The second possibility is hired units constituted as a "Rapid Reaction Force" within an overall peacekeeping operation. Whenever recalcitrant local parties break peace agreements or threaten the operation, military firms would be hired to offer the muscle that blue helmets are unable or unwilling to provide. The quick insertion of a more combat-minded force, even a relatively small private one, could be critical in deterring local adversaries and stiffening the back of the overall peace operation. Paid firms might thus provide the short-term coercion necessary at critical junctures in the operation.

The final, and most contentious, scenario is the complete outsourcing of the operation. When a genocide or humanitarian crisis occurs and no state is willing to step forward to send its own troops, the intervention itself might be turned over to private firms. Upon their hire (by the U.N. or anyone else willing to pay), the firm would deploy to a new area, defeat any local opposition, set up infrastructures for protecting and supporting refugees, and then, once the situation was stabilized, potentially hand over control to regular troops. This idea may sound quite incredible but actually was an option considered by policymakers behind closed doors during the refugee crisis that took place in eastern Zaire in 1996. Both the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping and the U.S. National Security Council discussed the idea that, in lieu of U.N. peacekeepers, a private firm be hired to create a secure humanitarian corridor. The plan was dismissed when the question of who would actually foot the bill was raised.

The scenarios illustrate how the concept of the private sector taking over peace operations could radically transform the very nature of peacekeeping, opening up all sorts of new possibilities. For example, firm executives have proposed that they could be paid to take back cities such as Mogadishu, which have been lost to warlords and lawlessness. The firms would stabilize

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them and then turn the cities over to local or U.N. administration, thus perhaps allowing failed states to rejoin the international system. Similarly, the aforementioned Executive Outcomes performed a business exploration of whether it would have had the capacity to intervene in Rwanda in 1994. Internal plans claim that the company could have had armed troops on the ground within 14 days of its hire and been fully deployed with over 1,500 of its own soldiers, along with air and fire support (roughly the equivalent of the U.S. Marine force that first deployed into Afghanistan), within six weeks. The cost for a six-month operation to provide protected safe havens from the genocide was estimated at $150 million (around $600,000 a day). This private option compares quite favorably with the eventual U.N. relief operation, which deployed only after the killings. The U.N. operation ended up costing $3 million a day (and did nothing to save hundreds of thousands of lives).

More recently, a consortium of military firms, interestingly entitled the "International Peace Operations Association," has proposed that it be hired to work on behalf of the largely ineffectual MONUC peacekeeping operations in the Eastern Congo. The private military firms, which range from aerial surveillance operators to a company of Gurkha veterans, have offered to create a "Security Curtain" (50 km demilitarized zone) in one of the most lawless areas on the African continent. The IPOA's charge would be between $100-200 million, dependent on the scale of the operation. So far, it has found no takers, but the level of violence in the area continues to escalate.

Privatization's perils

OBVIOUSLY, SUCH PROPOSALS hold great promise, which explains the enthusiasm for them. But before the international community leaps into the privatization revolution, it would do well also to consider its perils. A perfect market exists only in theory, and marketizing public services therefore carries both advantages and disadvantages. To put it in economic terms, privatization of any type always carries positive and negative externalities. This is never more true than in the military sphere, where profit motives further cloud the fog of war. While experience has shown that these private military businesses may be able to operate more efficiently and effectively than the forces of public organizations, their hire also has often raised an array of worrisome issues. These challenges are certainly better resolved *before* peacekeeping is turned over to the private market.

The first issue is the contractual dilemmas that arise with privatization. There are obvious market incentives for firms to act in their clients' interests. Any company that does otherwise risks not being hired again. The problem is that market constraints are always imperfect and tend to work only over the long term. In actuality, the security goals of clients are often in tension with the firms' aim of profit maximization. The result is that considerations

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of the good of the private company are not always identical with the public good. For privatized peacekeeping, the ensuing dangers include all the problems one has in standard contracting and business outsourcing. The hired firms have incentives to overcharge, pad their personnel lists, hide failures, not perform to their peak capacity, and so on. The worry, though, is that these are all now transferred into the security realm, where people's lives are at stake.

The most worrisome contractual dilemma, however, is that outsourcing also entails turning over control of the actual provision of service. For peacekeeping, this means the troops in the field are not part of national armies, but private citizens hired off the market, working for private firms. Security is now at the mercy of any change in market costs and incentives. One example of the resulting danger derives from the nasty habit humanitarian interventions have of becoming more complex over time. A firm hired to establish a safe haven might later find the situation more difficult than it originally expected. The operation might become unprofitable or, due to any increase in local opposition, more dangerous than anticipated. Thus, the company could find it in its corporate interest to pull out. Or, even if the company is kept in line by market constraints, its employees might decide that the personal risks they face in sticking it out in an operation are too high relative to their pay. Not bound by military law, they can simply break their contracts without fear of punishment and find safer, better paying work elsewhere. In either case, the result is the same: the abandonment of those who were dependent on private protection without consideration for the political costs or the client's ability to quickly replace them.

Current international law has been found inapplicable to the actions of the industry.

Second, privatization also raises certain risks stemming from problems of adverse selection and a lessening of accountability. Military provider firms are not always looking for the most congenial workforce, but instead, understandably enough, recruit those known for their effectiveness. For example, many former members of the most notorious and ruthless units of the Soviet and apartheid regimes have found employment in the industry. These individuals acted without concern for human rights in the past and certainly could do so again. In either case, the industry cannot be described as imbued with a culture of peacekeeping.

Even if the firms are scrupulous in screening their hires (which is hard to accomplish, given that few prospective employees would think to include an "atrocities committed" section on their resumes), it is still difficult for them to monitor their troops in the field. Furthermore, if employees do commit violations, there is little incentive for a firm to turn them over to any local authorities. To do so risks scaring off both clients and other prospective

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employees. This turned out to be the case recently in the Balkans. Employees of Dyncorp, who had been contracted to perform police duties for the U.N. and aircraft maintenance for the U.S. Army, were later implicated in child prostitution rings. Dyncorp's Bosnia site supervisor even filmed himself raping two women. These employees were transferred out of the country, and none were ever criminally prosecuted.

Industry executives counter that U.N. peacekeepers have certainly been involved in crimes of their own in the past, so the risks of human rights violations occurring during peace operations are nothing new. The difference with privatization, though, is that while soldiers in U.N. missions are ultimately held responsible under their national military code of justice, contracted peacekeepers are subject only to the laws of the market. Current international law has been found inapplicable to the actions of the industry, as the firms fall outside of the outdated legal conventions that deal only with individual mercenaries. The only possible regulation must then come either from the law of the state in which the operation is taking place or the law of the state in which the firm is based.

Peacekeepers' roles and duties differ markedly from regular military operations.

Since the collapse of the rule of law is what tends to create the conditions for hiring firms in the first place, the first alternative is almost never an option. The transnational nature of the industry makes the second option of home-state regulation difficult as well. Besides the fact that extraterritorial monitoring (i.e., of firms operating outside national boundaries) is very difficult, any time a firm finds the regulation too onerous, it can simply transfer to more friendly environs. Moreover, even among firms that stay based in the few countries with the ability and will to regulate, the jurisdiction is still problematic. For example, U.S. criminal law does not apply outside of U.S. territorial and special maritime jurisdictions, so that if an employee of an American military firm commits an offense abroad, the likelihood of prosecution is extremely low. Consequently, other than nonrenewal of contract, there are no real checks and balances on military firms that will ensure full accountability.

The third challenge of privatization is its long-term implications for local parties. The key to any durable peace is the restoration of legitimacy. In particular, this requires the return of control over organized violence to public authorities. Unfortunately, if peacekeeping is privatized, the companies may become a temporary mechanism for preserving peace but still do little to address the underlying causes of unrest and violence.

In the view of many, most importantly the U.N. Department of Peacekeeping (which may have a vested bureaucratic interest in opposing the privatization of forces), the act of becoming a peacekeeper is about more

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than just changing the color of one's helmet or beret. Peacekeepers' roles and responsibilities differ markedly from regular military operations. They require an entirely new cultural outlook focused on humanitarian concerns, which at times can duel with or shackle normal military instincts. Not only must peacekeepers operate under very different rules of engagement, but the most important directive is a guiding ethic of neutrality, the act of not taking sides.

Thus, the most successful peacekeeping operations (such as experiences in Mozambique, Namibia, and Guatemala) are not simply about placing third-party troops on the ground. Instead, they include a wide variety of "peace-building" activities designed to restore torn social fabrics and foster cooperation among local parties. These range from cease-fire monitoring and troop disarmament and demobilization to reconstruction and election monitoring. Thus, U.N. operations are often so unwieldy for the very reason that they must also carry on these essential activities. Private military firms, untrained or uninterested in the culture of peacekeeping, might be ill-equipped to handle them. Moreover, reliance on an outside private force does little to reestablish the local social contract. Instead, it appears more likely to reinforce the idea that power belongs only to those with the ability to afford it.

The ills of United Nations peacekeeping have been known for over a decade.

Finally, the nitty-gritty details of implementation often bedevil privatization's promise in regular government contracting and general industry; they likely will do so with peacekeeping as well. For example, there is no clear answer to the question of who should have the power to hire private military firms. The first scenario of contracted protection not only challenges norms of aid group neutrality, but also perhaps hazardously expands the powers of these outside organizations, which are responsible only to their donors. The presence of such protection forces entails a further multiplication of armed forces on the ground, hardly the best thing in the midst of a complex operation. Likewise, if the power to hire military firms for peacekeeping is restricted to the U.N., it is still unclear what body of the institution should decide. The decision-making process of the General Assembly is certainly unwieldy and also biased against certain states. Limiting authority to the Security Council, however, leaves the developing world — the very place where the privatized deployments are likely to occur — underrepresented. The result is that many of the same arguments that have been made against the U.N.'s having its own standing army also apply to it having its own contracted force.

Similar concerns also occur at the operational level. In the rapid reaction force scenario, for example, there will likely be difficulties of integrating a better-paid private force within a larger U.N. peacekeeping force. The prob-

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able resentment between the two forces could jeopardize operational cohesion. Likewise, it is difficult to determine who should be in operational command. Few military firms are willing to accept outside commanders of their units, particularly from the U.N., while clients would obviously prefer to have their own people at the top. In lieu of this, some firms have expressed a willingness to allow outside observers to be present during their operations. The exact powers of these observers, though, are also unsettled. For example, who will provide them and ensure their independence? Will they be like rapporteurs, just providing independent reporting on the operations, or like referees, with the ability to veto certain actions or suspend operations in mid-course?

Hard choices

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY must face up to the fact that its own weaknesses have presented it with a hard choice. It is only a matter of time before the next humanitarian crisis occurs in an area that falls outside the interests of the leading states. Whenever it happens, there is a strong possibility that the U.N. will either have to stomach its concerns about the unseemliness of privatized peacekeeping or face the prospect of watching thousands of men, women, and children die when the market could have saved them.

The onus is to deal with these issues now, before the next crisis brings this quandary to the fore. This requires action on two fronts. The ills of U.N. peacekeeping have been known for over a decade. As pithy as it sounds, it would be in the interest not only of the institution, but also of its primary donors finally to do something about them. A good starting point would be full support for the implementation of the Brahimi Report, a statement of recommendations on peacekeeping reform written last year by an international body of experts. Prime among these proposals is to raise the bar for the recruiting and vetting of international peacekeeper units.

The U.N. should also seriously explore the possibility of using the private market to get a better bang for its buck out of existing peacekeeping units. Military support firms already provide the transport, communications, and logistics of operations for many militaries from well-off states. For example, Brown & Root Services provides such support to U.S. forces deployed in the Balkans, Central Asia, and the Gulf. Units from the developing world, which make up the majority of U.N. forces, are glaringly weak in performing these functions. By outsourcing these services and standardizing them over the whole U.N. peacekeeping system, a synergy of public troops and private support might become possible. Similarly, military consultant firms might be able to provide training and assistance that would improve U.N. operational output.

The second front is perhaps even more difficult than U.N. reform. The

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decision to watch genocide and do nothing not only is morally unacceptable, but also is likely untenable in a world of ever-present media attention. So, if the international community is unwilling to pay the costs of providing its own capable peacekeeping forces, then it is better that it now begin finding ways to mitigate the underlying concerns with contracting out humanitarian intervention. This is preferable to an ad hoc response at the point of crisis.

The U.N. is currently ill-prepared to enter the business environment that privatization entails. If the decision is made to turn down this path, it will have to make institutional adjustments to protect both its own and public interests. A good starting point is the creation of standardized monitoring and contracting processes. Other priorities include the establishment of clear contractual standards and incentives programs, systems for outside vetting of personnel, and the creation of independent observer teams (with powers not only to monitor, but also to control the delivery of payment in order to establish their authority over the firm). Most important, however, is that military firms be brought under the control of the law, just like any other industry. This will require both the extension of the International Court of Justice to their activities and clear contract provisos that military firm personnel fall under the jurisdiction of international tribunals.

From passenger planes serving as cruise missiles to private companies trading in armies, we live in a time of immense flux in the international security environment. A mere 10 years ago, the notion of private firms taking over the responsibilities of peacekeeping would have been absurd. It is now a real prospect. These firms, however, are not altruistic by any measure, meaning that peacekeeping would best be left to the real generals. But if the public sector is unwilling to get its own house in order, the private sector offers a new way to protect those who would otherwise be defenseless.

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China's Air-Power Puzzle

By JACQUELINE A. NEWMYER

CHINA IS WIDELY recognized as the next superpower. Over the past decade, it experienced tremendous economic growth and embarked on a major defense buildup. China now has the second largest defense budget in the world, with expenditures to boost its intercontinental ballistic missile arsenal and acquire nuclear submarines and destroyers. Yet the Chinese air force remains very weak, with capabilities dramatically inferior to the U.S.'s. The arsenals of the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) and Naval Air Force (PLANAF) consist mostly of fighter planes (used primarily for defensive purposes) imported from Russia. The scarcity of bombers (used for offensive purposes) and China's continued reliance on foreign planes pose a puzzle to U.S. defense planners. Apparently content to rely on missiles to project power, China's doctrine contrasts sharply with American ideas about the importance of air superiority.

Following the successful air campaigns of the 1991 Gulf War, Chinese defense analysts tuned in to the American debate over the possibility of rely-

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Jacqueline A. Newmyer, a graduate student at Oxford, is a consulant to the Defense Department with Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC).

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ing on air power alone and the connection between the use of air power and avoiding friendly military and foreign civilian casualties. In recent publications, generals from China's military academies have treated air power-related themes — including what America's strategic air advantage consists in and how it might be mitigated or neutralized — at length.[1] Chinese observers also noted how the wars in Kosovo and Afghanistan confirmed American faith in the increasing efficacy of air power in light of dramatic technological advances.

A lengthy May 2000 article in the PLA's daily newspaper emphasizes the importance of improving China's air power capabilities. "In the 1990s, air warfare . . . reached a zenith," states author Dong Wenxian. "And no sooner had the Gulf War ended than the US President declared, 'The most important lesson learned from the Gulf War is the value of air power.'" Characterizing U.S. air power in Bosnia and Kosovo as the new standard mode of warfare, the writer concludes, "The primary threat faced by peace-loving third-world countries comes from the air, and regardless of whether they are willing or have the capabilities . . . the contest in the air will be the decisive one."[2] Similarly, in a 1998 article called "The Military Revolution and Air Power," Major General Zheng Shenxia, president of China's Air Force Command College, and Colonel Zhang Changzhi argue: "Future information [high-tech] war will rely more and more on air superiority. The air force will no longer be an important independent strategic force but an effective conventional campaign force that all services will depend upon."[3] Their discussions indicate that China's defense establishment recognizes the centrality of air power to U.S. operations. But the commentary, considered together with China's capabilities, suggests that in a military confrontation, China would adopt a different approach from the United States.

China's leaders from Mao and Deng to Jiang Zemin have scanted domestic aircraft production, preferring to invest in ballistic missiles, antiaircraft artillery (AAA), and surveillance and reconnaissance equipment. China now

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[1]See, for example, Wang Hucheng, "The US Military's 'Soft Ribs' and Strategic Weaknesses," *Beijing Liaowang* (July 5, 2000) in FBIS CPP20000705000081; Liu Hsiao-hua, "Military Commission Deals Soberly with Military Cooperation — Sino-US Options as Viewed from Multilateral Tactics and Strategy," *Hong Kong Kuang Chiao Ching* (November 16, 1997) in FBIS HK1012063597; Kong Lingtong, "Discussion of Topographical Advantages in the Wake of the Kosovo War," *Beijing Jiefangjun Bao* (September 14, 1999) in FBIS OW2809121099.

[2]Dong Wenxian, "Emergence of Modern Air War," *Beijing Jiefangjun Bao* (May 9, 2000) in FBIS CPP20000509000073.

[3]Zheng Shenxia and Zhang Changzhi, "The Military Revolution and Air Power," in Michael Pillsbury, ed., *Chinese Views of Future Warfare* (National Defense University Press, 1998).

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has about 200 conventional ballistic missiles pointed at Taiwan and is adding 50 more each year. In total, the Chinese arsenal boasts 800-1,000 fighter aircraft, many of which are in some state of disrepair. With air power proving ever more important in the post-Cold War world, China's relative neglect of this force branch constitutes a conundrum.

The divergence of Chinese air power doctrine from the U.S.'s presents another conundrum. Where the American literature stresses the goal of gaining and maintaining air superiority, Chinese doctrine emphasizes preemption and deception. Against a technologically superior foe like the U.S., China's strategists recommend disabling the enemy to prevent his exercising command of the air.[4] This approach could entail preemptive strikes on local enemy airfields or, less dramatically, the use of diplomacy to alienate the enemy from regional allies.

Chinese air power doctrine emphasizes preemption and deception.

The preeminence of this strategy implies that the only kind of enemy on China's strategic radar screen is one like the United States. China's defense statements, however, suggest otherwise, as they analyze potential threats from Taiwan, Japan, and internal insurgents, among others. So it is especially puzzling that air power figures into Chinese military calculations only in the context of countering control of the skies by a better-equipped foe. The U.S., if faced with an inferior or equally well-armed enemy at home or abroad, would at least consider deploying bombers and would likely decide upon their use. But Chinese doctrine appears to exclude this sort of response. Discussions of air power in China are confined to neutralizing an attacking air force through the use of AAA, missiles, and forms of information warfare — for instance, jamming enemy targeting systems.

To what should we attribute the modesty of China's accomplishments in the fields of aircraft manufacture and flying? And why, in the age of air power, do China's leaders privilege ground-launched missiles over planes and pilots? Answering these questions requires an examination of civilizational factors — cultural, political, and historical influences — whose effects have been understudied and remain little understood. When features of its

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[4]See, for example, Xu Sheng, "Accurate Attacks Will Dominate Future Battlefields," *Beijing Jiefangjun Bao* (June 22, 1999) in FBIS OW1307234899; Tang Baodong, "Difficulties in Pursuing Hegemony — Weakness of the United States in Fighting a Local War as Viewed from the Kosovo War," *Shanghai Guoji Zhanwang* (July 23, 1999) in FBIS FTS19990713001922; Cheng Bingwen, "Countermeasures and Thoughts for Fighting 'No-Contact Warfare' — On the Need to Refocus Our Preparations for Military Struggles," *Beijing Jiefangjun Bao* (October 4, 1999) in FBIS OW1310110599.

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culture and regime are taken into account, the internal logic of China's approach to air power becomes clear.

Cultural roots

To begin at the beginning — with the religious and philosophical beliefs evinced in the earliest artifacts of Chinese civilization — is to explore the enduring intellectual framework that underlies Chinese military thought today. And foremost among these beliefs is the Chinese teaching of immanence, which contrasts sharply with Western notions of transcendence.

This fundamental difference in perspectives on the world may be traced to antiquity. In the West, the universal human question, "What is man's relationship to the rest of the world in which he finds himself?" inspired belief in creation by a supreme, holy, and anthropomorphic deity. The Bible's description of human beings as having been created in God's image implies that there is something holy and worthy of respect in each individual. And God's commands in Genesis 1 to be fruitful, multiply, and exercise dominion emphasize man's role as a cultivator and transformer of the world. The biblical premise of a transcendent deity thus gives rise to the idea that man rules the earth — in accordance with God's precepts, improving it and making laws that respect His will.

In ancient China, by contrast, fundamental questions about the world and man's place in it yielded a view of the divine as immanent. In this view, all of nature is sacred, and man occupies no special place in the cosmos.[5] Human beings, therefore, must strive not to disturb the world. Men should instead adapt and blend into their surroundings.

The doctrine of immanence first arises in a 3,000-year-old Chinese classic, *I Ching*, which teaches that opposites like fellowship and enmity, life and death, and masculine and feminine contend with each other throughout time. These opposites can be understood only with reference to each other. In response to the human impulse to question and seek resolution, the *I Ching* refers man back to the source of his concerns. Because the world is sacred, the problem for man is not to reconcile apparently conflicting phenomena but to fathom their underlying connectedness within an extant cosmic order. Instead of trying to resolve the tensions he perceives around him, man ought to adapt himself to the way of the world. Rather than conquer, he should submit and retire from active probing.

The Confucian tradition clarifies the implications of the *I Ching* for man

[5]The Confucian tradition does posit human specialness in the context of immanent divinity, but the focus on self-cultivation in Confucianism is holistic, centering on man's connecting himself to the continuous chain of being around him.

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in society. From the *I Ching*'s dialectical premise, Confucius develops his notion of naming (assigning titles to people that denote familial and social roles) and propriety. In Confucianism, the relational nature of man's position — his definition by reference to the people around him — dictates that he should not assume a fixed attitude and try to maintain it across all circumstances, but rather should adjust his conduct in light of ever-changing circumstances. Despite the appearance of flexibility in this doctrine, man's status as a relationally defined creature imposes a certain rigidity: His position determines the ways in which he may behave, ruling out deviation or individuality.

China's Taoist tradition adapts the *I Ching* into philosophical principles. Recognizing the fertile relationship between opposites in nature, Taoism teaches that life's mysteries, contrasts, and seeming contradictions are reconciled by the Tao ("the Way"). Sages are able to achieve proximity to the Tao by subjugating all desires, including the desire for objective knowledge. The value of cultivating acceptance of the world while stripping oneself of the urge to know it emerges in the Taoist proverb: "In pursuit of learning, / One daily expands his sphere of activity, / But in pursuit of the tao, / One must daily reduce it, / Reduce it, and reduce it again / Until one attains a state of non-activity." The ideal of doing nothing provides a form of insulation from the vicissitudes of existence. Far from encouraging mastery of nature as the Bible does, Chinese tradition extols submission and radiates disdain for knowledge of, and the ability to manipulate, material things.

In an important sense, the Taoist teaching of quiescence or submission glorifies power.

Though it mitigates against conquest of nature, in an important sense, the Taoist teaching of quiescence or submission glorifies power. Imperceptibly, the weak triumphs over the strong. Water, for instance, is cast in Taoist literature as the ultimate way-like element: "The meekest in the world / Penetrates the strongest in the world, / As nothingness enters into that-which-has-no-opening. / Hence, I am aware of the value of non-action / And of the value of teaching with no-words. / As for the value of non-action, / Nothing in the world can match it." The insistence in Chinese strategic sources on patience and indirection harmonizes with this portrayal of water. From meek appearances come striking results.

The idea that it is the way of the world for the weak to defeat the strong appears in a body of Chinese stories that has been passed on for centuries. Of course, the weak vs. strong trope is not absent from the Western tradition — surfacing, for instance, in the biblical story of David and Goliath — but it receives less emphasis in the West than it does in China's cultural heritage. The ancient Chinese tales of dynastic foundings highlight the ability of

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inferior challengers to conquer haughty potentates. In these stories crafty advisers, spies, and double agents figure prominently. What is emphasized is the artfulness of the conquest. Wise princes, their deputies, and their operatives display resolve, patience, consciousness of the impressions inspired by their actions, sensitivity to disguise, a knack for devising ruses, and the ability to recognize and exploit opportunities.

Western readers of the Chinese stories might be surprised by the absence of talk about justice and the relatively modest attention paid to individual merit, but again, this is consistent with the Chinese teaching of immanence. Calling the dynastic founders "heroes," in fact, may be misleading insofar as they are not illuminated by Homeric character portraits or subjected to biographical treatment. Unlike the heroes of Western epics, Chinese protagonists are not depicted as facing tragic choices, since, after all, what could appear to be a conflict is reconciled by the Tao. All that is conveyed about these figures is what is necessary to understand their actions in battle — with special emphasis on the strategies and tactics they adopt. No discussion of morals and very little of motives appears in the tales. In a cosmos in which humans do not occupy a special place, they are not expected to redress wrongs; moreover, the height of craftiness is to recognize that because everyone else is inculcated with the idea of going with the flow, deception is a particularly powerful weapon.

Practical political wisdom and Taoist sensitivity to harmony with nature commingle in another contemporarily relevant compendium, the ancient military classics, which are still used in Chinese military academies. The most famous, Sun Tzu's *Art of War* (*Sun tzu bingfa* — "bing" means "war," and "fa" means "habits" or "rules"), belongs to a collection of military manuals dating back to the 200-year Warring States period before China's unification under the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC). Two thousand years later, Mao adopted Sun Tzu in his struggle against the Nationalist forces, and references to the ancient classics recur in contemporary statements of strategy, including air power doctrine.

In these military classics, generals are counseled to ensure that their troops share a uniform outlook and are positioned to act in perfect concert. The soldier's individuality is erased. At the same time, the manuals emphasize the role of environmental factors, urging commanders to harness gravity. The attention to impersonal, natural forces separates the Chinese strategic tradition from Western sources of strategy.

Political roots

CHINA'S POLITICAL SYSTEM reflects civilizational tendencies or cultural norms — particularly, the de-emphasis of individual will — that have conduced to authoritarian rule for more than two millennia, from the ancient emperors to today's communists. The tradition of

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Chinese authoritarianism also constitutes a response to the problem of unifying an enormous and diverse polity. Chinese rulers from the imperial era to the present have faced a common security dilemma: how to protect China's borders and prevent or quell domestic insurgency without deploying an army so large as to be uncontrollable and thus threaten the regime. Their recurring answer to this challenge, in light of the cultural strains discouraging special regard for human beings as such or for the human potential to master the world, has been to impose top-down rule via whatever means necessary. This political solution, in turn, reinforces the cultural norm against individualism.

While the dynasties — from the ancient Qin to the modern Qing (1644-1912) — showed some variation in their approach to the unification challenge, all ultimately relied on military or economic might as a bulwark for rule from the center, in which the emperor's will preceded all others. Once the power of a dynasty to fight foreign threats or internal rivals declined, the dynasty was seen to have lost its claim to the "Mandate of Heaven" and was ousted. Historians Arthur Waldron and Pamela Kyle Crossley have studied and classified the policies adopted by emperors to confront the challenge of warding off invaders while maintaining authority within China's borders.

China's emperors were subject to cultural and political pressures against conciliation.

In *The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), Waldron asserts that some emperors (call them the wall-builders) took a harsh, anti-accommodation line against neighboring powers, while others (call them the dealmakers) negotiated, traded, and honored agreements with them. Waldron goes on to argue that even those dynasties initially led by dealmakers ended up under wall-builders, whose refusal to pacify enemies through diplomacy ensured the dynasty's demise. To explain the recurrence of this unviable hard-line posture over the whole imperial era, Waldron suggests that China's emperors were subject to cultural and political pressures against conciliation. The lesson that emerges from his study of the dynasties' foreign policy is of their essential belligerence, the foreign-policy expression of individual-crushing authoritarianism at home.

Pamela Kyle Crossley arrives at a similar conclusion by focusing on the dynastic approach to domestic affairs. In *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (University of California Press, 2000), she distinguishes two distinct approaches to political culture. Some emperors established a horizontal political culture by spreading a single, rigid, regime-boosting ideology across their territory and forcing their subjects to identify with each other in a common state of submission. Others established a vertical culture by building ties to each of the populations under their jurisdiction

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and importing elements of these subject cultures into the central court culture. Neither approach was fail-safe. Emperors taking the horizontal tack were bound to maintain the appearance of strength at all times to stifle dissent, while emperors who pursued a vertical strategy had to buttress their tolerance with material benefits. Once a dynasty under the horizontal model showed weakness or one under the vertical model suffered a financial setback, its days in power were numbered. These two solutions to the problem of maintaining domestic order — forcibly indoctrinating or bribing subject populations — both reflect and reaffirm the lack of respect for individuals and their agency that flows from the Chinese immanence teaching.

The communist leaders of China today see themselves in part as heirs of the imperial epoch and have learned from the dynasties' centralizing modes of government. The communists, however, face an especially difficult problem of administration, as they have only the Qing Dynasty as precedent in overseeing such an expansive territory. Out of the vacuum left by the Qing's demise in 1912, Mao emerged as the victor in part because he wielded an ideology (Maoism) that justified the reassertion of central control over China's far-flung inhabitants. In Crossley's terms, to address the challenge of unification, Mao cultivated a horizontal political culture emanating from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Like previous dynasts who took that approach, Mao left his heirs susceptible: A well-timed domestic uprising or foreign incursion could undermine the CCP's ideology-based, force-backed claim to rule. Thus, the massacre authorized by Deng Xiaoping in response to the Tiananmen Square protest of 1989 and other seemingly disproportionate crackdowns (against academics and other political dissidents, practitioners of Falun Gong, and religious Christians) are attributable to the precariousness of the regime's position. The alacrity and harshness with which protests are suppressed reflects an ideology that accords no special dignity or worth to the individual. The same impulse to defend the regime at the expense of its subjects led the communist authorities to ignore the SARS crisis for as long as they could.

China's communist leaders see themselves in part as heirs of the imperial epoch.

In addition to reinforcing their power through domestic displays of brutality and inhumanity, Deng Xiaoping and his successor, Jiang Zemin, acted aggressively in foreign affairs. The continuing menace to Taiwan seems to have as much to do with shoring up the CCP's internal authority as it does with repatriating the island's residents. By their provocative actions, the communists intend not to cultivate popular approval but rather to persuade the populace of their authority and strength. Such displays fortify their position as rulers over a subject population whose meekness they encourage.

An appreciation of the communists' insecurity provides a window onto

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Beijing's handling of the U.S. spy plane that crash-landed after colliding with a Chinese naval aircraft in spring 2001. By delaying the return of the crew members, Jiang Zemin bolstered his domestic prestige. Americans saw the delay as unnecessarily hostile, even to the point of brinkmanship. The contrasting assessment from a PLA strategist at the National Defense University is revelatory: "The Chinese government was very restrained over this incident. Its performance in relation to this issue has both preserved the national dignity and distinguished right from wrong." He continues: "Compared with the Chinese embassy bombing incident [in Kosovo] in 1999, the performance of China in handling this incident has been more mature."[6] The conflicting Chinese and U.S. interpretations of the incident reflect the different perspectives of a regime that depends on its subjects' fear of powerful central authority and one that derives its legitimacy from the consent of the governed.

Chinese air power

CULTURE AND POLITICS in China have converged to create an environment hostile to the development of air power. The Chinese are weak in their domestic aircraft production capabilities; their arsenal lacks long-range, offensive bombers; and their doctrine indicates a perverse preference for ground-launched missiles in an era dominated by aircraft. Each of these weaknesses is in accord with longstanding Chinese cultural and political factors.

At its core, air power involves gaining access to a realm of nature — air and space — from which human beings were long excluded. Man in flight achieves dramatic conquest of the world around him. The tremendous technological achievement underlying the development of air power is thus in contradiction to the Taoist precept that man should honor and adjust to nature. Unlike the Western impulse toward mastery, China's cultural inheritance discourages scientific inquiry and discovery.

The fate of technological advances in the imperial era is instructive. Late in the first millennium, the emperors of the Song Dynasty (920-1269) tolerated experimentation as long as it was confined to the world of magic — a world that was unknowable and therefore posed no threat. Sometime in the ninth century, Taoist alchemists mixing together various ingredients in search of an elixir that would grant longevity stumbled upon gunpowder. But the innovation was not then harnessed to the cause of waging war, as it was when it arrived in the West. Instead, imperial authorities, recognizing its destabilizing potential, stifled the innovation.

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[6] "Mid-Air Collision and Future of Sino-US Relations," *Hong Kong Zhongguo Pinglun* (June 1, 2001) in FBIS CPP20010621000113.

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The exploitation of earlier, combat-ready inventions, such as crossbows (between 300 and 100 BC) and trebuchets (catapults, about 500 AD), was similarly delayed until the reign of the non-ethnically Chinese Mongol Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). Where the ethnically Chinese Song Dynasty had feared that distributing crossbows would upset the class system by empowering ordinary soldiers, the Mongols were free of such reservations, or, at least, they refused to let domestic political considerations impinge on their program of conquest.[7] China's wariness of weapons development in the twentieth century bears traces of the suspicion surrounding technology in the imperial age. The same concerns about empowering individuals and disturbing the domestic status quo motivated the rulers of the Song Dynasty and Mao.

The potential of technology to empower soldiers is nowhere more stark than in the field of air power.

The potential of technology to empower soldiers is perhaps nowhere more stark than in the field of air power. The pilot is a virtuoso, commanding a machine that grants him surpassing mobility. From his position in the cockpit, he can not only defy nature but also, if sufficiently motivated, threaten his own regime. (9-11 provided a horrific demonstration of what can happen when control of an airplane falls into the wrong hands.) For this reason, modern air power poses a highly potent threat to authoritarian governments. An insubordinate air force pilot or two might wreak destruction on a grand scale.

While Western liberal democracies have elicited a high degree of loyalty, so that the threat of coup d'etat has been relatively insignificant, the situation of an empire, held together by force and not loyalty, is different. The emperor constantly faces the menace of mutiny. Service in the air force both encourages the independence of spirit that could lead to mutiny and equips would-be mutineers with the most dangerous weapons in the arsenal. Because rebellion has never been a serious fear in the U.S. military, air force (and submarine) officers not only wield these weapons but also possess great discretion over their use. In contrast, Chinese leaders have been reluctant to entrust quality planes to their air force, much less top-of-the-line precision-guided munitions. The alternative to the manned aircraft is a weapon that can be centrally controlled, such as a missile.

The use of planes for military purposes in China dates to the 1920s, when the country was engulfed by the civil war that followed the abdication of the last Qing emperor. All sides in the civil war — local warlords, the Nationalists, and eventually the communists — inherited from the Qing a

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[7]Alfred Crosby, *Throwing Fire: Projectile Technology Through History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 96-97, 85-86.

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legacy of technological backwardness. Thus, all were forced to buy foreign aircraft, setting a precedent for reliance on aviation imports. External assistance was admitted because it was deemed necessary.

Though the communist victors in the civil war accepted foreign aid and technology, their emphasis, from Mao through the present day, has been on limiting the influence of this assistance. The authoritarian priority of creating the appearance of unassailable might has dictated that the regime claim to have imbued imported weapons with Chinese characteristics — as a way of projecting strength in the face of domestic rivals. Nonetheless, the communists' early forays into the world of air power were accomplished only with support from abroad, particularly from the Soviets.

In the 1960s, following the Sino-Soviet rift, Mao embarked on the Cultural Revolution — which involved purging the PLA officer corps and stymied defense-related science and technology innovation. The Chinese fell further and further behind, remaining wedded to the low-tech People's War doctrine, which substituted masses of men for materiel. Without Soviet aid, and in the face of domestic upheaval, the progress of Chinese air power was all but curtailed. Mao's sense of the insecurity of his position led him to act aggressively in foreign affairs. In the 1962 Sino-Indian War, the Vietnam War, the 1969 clash with the Russians at Zhenbao (Damansky) Island, and China's 1979 invasion of Vietnam, undertaken by Mao's successor Deng Xiaoping, the regime succeeded in "teaching a lesson" to its rivals — all without using air power.

The communists' early forays into the world of air power were accomplished only with support from abroad.

The 1979 showdown in Vietnam, the last major Chinese military operation, provides some useful lessons. Air power did not play a role in this foray because planes taking off from Chinese airfields situated far from the Vietnamese border lacked the fuel capacity to reach the combat zone. China was nonetheless able to humiliate a technologically superior foe, affirming the ancient theme of the dynastic foundings tales — the weak prevail against the strong.

The repercussions of the Vietnam experience are also instructive. The military deficiency exposed by the invasion prompted Deng to launch a PLAAF reform program. In the post-World War II period, Mao's doctrine of People's War had been centered on luring enemy forces deep into the mainland and thus downplayed the role of air defense. As Beijing's perception of the security situation changed with the deterioration of Sino-Soviet ties, the People's War doctrine was amended to account for the Soviet threat. The Chinese built air bases along the northern border, equipping them with AAA to repel Soviet planes. In light of the decline of the Soviet menace in the mid-1980s, Deng instituted measures to prepare the PLA for small, limited

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engagements, which he judged more likely than nuclear confrontation. The result was an expansion of the PLAAF's mandate from a narrow air defense role to a close air support function. Finally, a third shift followed the Gulf War, which demonstrated the efficacy of U.S. high-tech air power deployed to remote battlefields. In the eyes of China's defense planners, this display highlighted the need to develop means of countering advanced, precision weapons and illustrated the value of a capacity for joint operations and long-range strikes.

While recognition of its importance to modern warfare has led the Chinese to accord air power an increasingly prominent place, a record of PLAAF radicalism has inclined leaders to restrain air force development. During the late Mao years, the dissenter Lin Biao, who was eventually purged from the regime and died in a mysterious plane crash over Mongolia, coopted the PLAAF's leadership. Lin's 1971-72 attempted coup was based in part on support from the air force, a fact that led Deng to pay particular attention to the mood of this service branch.

The regime's anxieties about maintaining power have depressed the air force's performance level.

The writings of party and military elites convey their fears about the insurrectionary potential of a modern air force. An article published in a pro-mainland Taiwanese daily after the downing of the U.S. spy plane sums up the concern: "Past examples show that whoever has possession of a plane has the power to do what they want with it. . . . In the 1980s, Sun Tianqin defected by flying a Mig-21 to South Korea, and in the face of protests by the Chinese Communists, American experts carefully 'observed' this aircraft."[8]

In Beijing's eyes, the tradition of PLAAF dissent lives on. The Falun Gong religious sect, identified by China's leaders as a threat to be eliminated, has won a significant air force following. In 2000, Yu Changxin, a septuagenarian retired PLAAF general, was arrested and sentenced to 17 years in prison after being accused of masterminding a Falun Gong demonstration in Beijing. Yu's incarceration, which made him the highest-ranking official yet to be punished for affiliation with Falun Gong, provoked an outcry from his former colleagues. They were further aggrieved by the death in captivity of Wang Yu, a 49-year air force officer.

The PLAAF's weakness, then, reflects the combined effects of cultural predispositions and conscious political choices. While China's political-military

[8]Liu Ping, "When Military Aircraft Approach Each Other in the Air, Games Can Easily Lead to Serious Consequences," *Taipei Chung-Kuo Shih-Pao* (April 3, 2001) in FBIS CPP20010403000091.

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elites, like their former mentors the Soviets, have devised ways of developing the air force without putting too much power in the hands of untrustworthy pilots, their inability to rely on recruits has had far-reaching effects. For instance, the PLAAF's training regimen minimizes flight hours, which severely limits the skill of China's pilots. (PLAAF pilots spend only 80-100 hours flying annually; their American counterparts spend at least 280 hours in the air per year.) This economy is partly attributable to a desire to spare China's aging and fragile fleet from undue wear, but it also stems from a concern about giving yahoo recruits too many opportunities to defect. The regime's anxieties about maintaining power have depressed the air force's performance level.

All the attention to patriotism in the PLAAF crowds out the cultivation of the technical acumen necessary to maintain a high-tech air force and the skill to fly it. Communist party-building exercises play a central part in training at the academies, and citations of merit seem to be weighted heavily toward rewarding loyalty and discipline. Where U.S. exemplars stand to win the Medal of Honor for bravery and valor in the field, their Chinese counterparts are more likely to be promoted for solidarity with the party. Since the retirement of the generation that fought in Korea, the PLAAF has been led primarily by men who have not seen combat. Many of these officers owe their positions to their merit as representatives of the regime.

Americans stand to win the Medal of Honor for bravery in the field; their Chinese counterparts are promoted for solidarity with the party.

Despite the influence of cultural and political factors that mitigate against its development, statements concerning air power in recent Chinese strategy documents reflect an appreciation of its critical role in modern combat. One recent article even emphasizes the importance of cultivating individual skill in the air force, citing a statistic from World War II that 80 percent of aircraft were shot down by 4 percent of the total pilot corps, the aces, and concluding, "The role of qualified personnel is more significant in the air as compared with that on the ground. Under conditions of high technology, the decisive role of qualified personnel is more significant than ever before."[9]

Contrary to the logic of such statements, China's leaders have been driven by the necessity of maintaining their hold on power to seek substitutes for pursuing Western-style air superiority and to direct technological development in ways that minimize the empowerment of potentially disloyal pilots.

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[9] *Beijing Xinhua Newsletter* (November 14, 1999) in FBIS OW30120085499.

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The advent of unmanned aerial vehicles augurs well for a regime that prefers central control.

Progress through adaptation

ALTHOUGH CHINESE DEFENSE intellectuals have kept abreast of U.S. debates over air power, Beijing has repeatedly expressed doubt at the efficacy of air power in the Gulf War, Kosovo, and Afghanistan.[10] In light of Chinese cultural assumptions and the insecurity of the regime, this reluctance to recognize air power's full potential should not be surprising. Very likely, the communist elites fail to understand the individualist principles that undergird American air power. They continue to greet instances of its politically troublesome success as a surprise. While it is true that many Americans failed to foresee the speed and low cost of the 1991 Gulf War, China might have used the knowledge gained from that experience to predict allied success in Kosovo. But given China's relative lack of air power capabilities, an acknowledgment by Jiang or one of his subordinates of American mastery of the air would compromise the reputation of the regime. Beijing's inability to fully appreciate American air power, then, betrays a weakness or inflexibility stemming from China's cultural and political roots.

A distinctive flexibility, however, also emerges from China's Taoist tradition insofar as it encourages receptivity and adaptation to the ways of the world, as water conforms to the shape of the channel through which it flows. For example, in addition to begrudgingly accepting the U.S. military's virtuosity in the air, Chinese strategists have been developing means of countering this American strength. Recent strategy documents highlight as vulnerabilities to be exploited U.S. reliance on regional bases and America's growing dependence on information technology.[11] In soft power terms, too, China is benefiting from its tradition of accommodating the forces at play in the world. Having detected a global economic new way, Beijing is developing a free-market system.

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[10]Tang Baodong, "Difficulties in Pursuing Hegemony — Weakness of the United States in Fighting a Local War as Viewed from the Kosovo War," *Shanghai Guoji Zhanwang* (July 23, 1999) in FBIS FTS19990713001922.

[11]See, for example, Cai Wei, "Exclusive Report: US Carriers are Not Myths," *Beijing Huanqiu Shibao* (June 22, 2001) in FBIS CPP20010625000107; Xu Xiaoyan, "Establishing an Information Resource Mobilization Mechanism with Chinese Characteristics," *Beijing Zhongguo Junshi Kexue* (October 20, 2000) in FBIS CPP20001205000152; Nie Yun, "Why Does the US Military Bring Such a Great Force to the Asia-Pacific Region?" *Beijing Zhongguo Qingnian Bao* (August 31, 2000) in FBIS CPP20000906000069.

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Whether economic reforms will engender liberalization in the political realm remains to be seen, but it is reasonable to expect that the introduction of market forces will promote a spirit of entrepreneurship and that this new spirit will have profound effects on the regime and perhaps on cultural norms. In the domain of air power, entrepreneurial values — competition, innovation, and excellence in performance — could foster a new regard for and tolerance of outstanding pilots. Unlike the USSR, which was crippled by the rigid manner in which its leaders pursued their self-interest, the Chinese may well benefit from their civilizational emphasis on adapting to the world. This adaptive tendency amplifies China's already giant potential.

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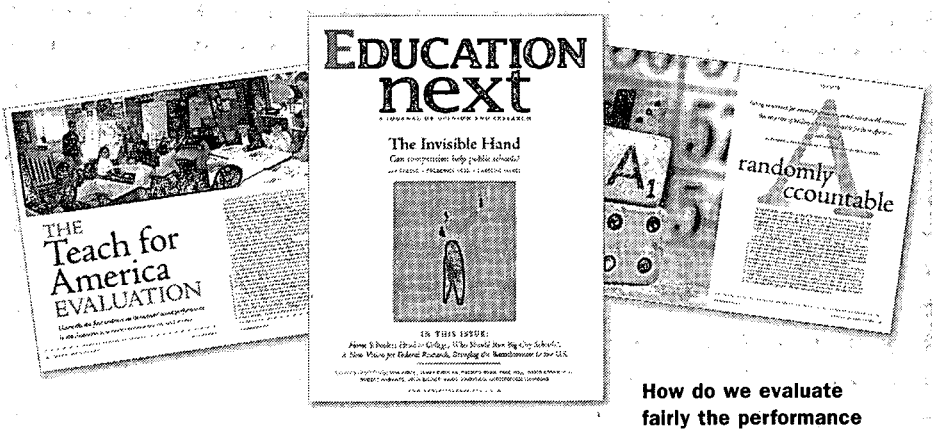

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BOOKS

Mapping the Archipelago

By ALEXANDER ROSE

ANNE APPLEBAUM. *Gulag: A History*. DOUBLEDAY. 671 PAGES. $35.00

OMINOUSLY, within just three months of the 1917 October Revolution, an exasperated Lenin proposed sentencing "the millionaire-saboteurs traveling in first- and second-class train compartments" to "half a year's forced labor in a mine." In August 1918, following an anti-Bolshevik rebellion in Penza, the great man called for "mass terror against the *kulaks*, priests and White Guards" (and the "unreliable"), specifying that these enemies of Progress were to be "locked up in a concentration camp outside town." By Christmas 1919, there were 21 such camps; a year later, 107. (Their number would eventually quintuple, each "camp" comprising hundreds, even thousands, of nameless *lagpunkts*.) Only in February 1992, nearly three months after the rotted hulk of the USSR had slipped into history's vasty deep, did the last camps at Perm belatedly disgorge their inmates.

The Gulag witnessed the birth pangs of the Soviet Empire (let's call a spade a spade, shall we?) — and its deathroes. Mutually parasitic, neither Gulag nor Empire could survive, let alone thrive, without the other. The duo comprised a curiously Siamese entity: One was but half of two; when one dies, so too must the other. Maintaining the awful majesty of Empire required slave labor; Gulag supplied it. Gulag required slaves; Empire supplied them.

The Bolshevik regime and its punishment apparatus are often compared to, or mentioned in the same breath with, its Nazi rival and the concentration-camp system. Fair enough, though this rough-and-ready approach tends to ignore differing national "mentalities" and distinct histories. The two resemble each other in many respects, to be sure, but in their respective attitudes towards those considered un-German or un-Soviet there is little that is similar.

Anne Applebaum's *Gulag: A History* brings some needed rigor to such debates. The general idea of the concentration camp may have been a common one, she writes, but the nature of any particular camp system "depended on the particular country, on the culture, and on the regime." Applebaum's sustained examination of the Gulag appears at a time in which facile equations of all "genocides" is increasingly common.

As a general proposition, too much reliance is placed on Hannah Arendt's

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Alexander Rose is the author of Kings in the North: The House of Percy in British History, 1066-1500 *(London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2002). The paperback edition appears in June.*

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theory of totalitarianism. Much like her description of the arresting figure of Adolf Eichmann as "banal," Arendt was far too glib in assessing Nazism and communism as almost identical phenomena. Applebaum herself briefly cites Arendt in concluding that the Soviet and Nazi camp-systems were "related."

This will not do. Whereas Nazism and communism are "related" in that they share some broad characteristics, the Holocaust and the Gulag are incomparable. The former was single-mindedly and ideologically directed at the physical and metaphysical annihilation of Jewry. In contrast, the incarceration and murder of Gypsies, homosexuals, Catholic activists, and communists proceeded in intense, if patchy, phases before petering out before 1940. Indeed, by the end of the war, roaming Gestapo squads had even moved on to executing "ordinary Germans" amid Berlin's smoky ruins for disloyalty to the Führer. The suffering of those minorities also persecuted by the Nazis is in no way diminished by the fact that the Jews were the major target of Hitlerism.

Though 3 million or so people died in its camps (out of the 28.7 million forced laborers who "passed" through them), the Gulag never operated as an extermination machine. Initially, the Gulag served to amputate dubious "politicals" from Sovietized society. Startlingly, for some writers and artists, according to reminiscences Applebaum has uncovered, confinement could, in a sense, even be liberating, especially compared to the squalor and misery of post-civil war Russia. They were allowed paper and ink, received presents and money from home, and were not (officially) obliged to work. When too many criminal elements were introduced into their cells, they gathered together and protested — surprisingly successfully — that their rights as political prisoners were being violated. (Only after 1945 did the number of "counter-revolutionary" politicals first become the majority of the total population. Unfortunately, we lack memoirs or poems left by incarcerated felons.) Even on the White Sea Canal project, the prisoner-run newspaper *Perekovka* ("Reforging") was filled with readers' letters complaining about shoe shortages, bad managers, the "squabbling and swearing" emanating from the women's barracks, and unfillable quotas.

THIS GULAG *glasnost* did not last long. By the late 1920s and early 30s, after they had destroyed the economy, the Soviet leadership realized that in the Gulag, labor was plentiful, docile, and cheap. And out there, lurking beneath the Arctic tundra and carpeting the Eastern expanses, beckoned the coal and oil and timber that could be bartered for foreign currency.

So long as costs were minimized and output maximized, the Gulag's return on investment would be more than sufficient to keep the gleaming new Soviet Union a going concern. Henceforth, the Gulag's primary function was to preserve a Potemkinesque Empire through economics. The mass murders that occurred generally consisted of shootings in the woods. Though to the inmates of these diabolical places this is a mere scholastic distinction, it is important to note that — unlike the Nazi death camps — the Gulag, put

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bluntly, had an interest in keeping its prisoners alive (the economically viable ones at least).

To this end, as Applebaum documents, NKVD inspectors filed reports complaining about the ghastly living conditions, "illegal" work hours, and poor medical care in the camps. One such inspector was annoyed to find that prisoners arriving at the Prikaspiiskii camp in Azerbaijan in December 1940 were obliged to sleep "beneath the open sky on damp ground." Camp commanders received an angry missive from Moscow in March 1942 noting that many of them were not allowing prisoners their nightly allowance of eight hours' sleep. Regulations also stated that prisoners were allotted a new towel each year, fresh sheets biannually, a pillowcase every four years, and a replacement blanket every five. The assumption, not always accurate, was that they would still be around to enjoy them. Another commandant, Lazar Kogan of Dmitlag, cautioned uncomradely cooks about serving "pig slops" instead of "Soviet meals." He felt the food being prepared was too "often tasteless and bland." The Gulag, too, provided medical care in clean hospitals for ailing prisoners. What was unique about the Gulag, recalled one inmate, was that "you were expected not only to be a slave laborer, but to sing and smile while you worked as well. They didn't just want to oppress us: they wanted us to thank them for it."

In their perversely paternalistic way, camps were also expected to oversee their inmates' political reeducation. That was the task of the *Kulturno-Vospitatelnaya Chast* (the Cultural Education Department, shortened to KVCh). Every camp was directed to have at least one KVCh counselor on hand, as well as a small library (filled with suitably improving works). Often, there was a "club" that organized theatrical performances, chess tournaments, "creative activities," edifying political lectures, and concerts. One priceless document Applebaum has excavated from the archives (the quality and depth of her research, throughout the book, is breathtaking) catalogues the repertoire of an all-singing, all-dancing troupe of NKVD minstrels. That Top 10 list in full:

1: The Ballad of Stalin.
2: The Cossack Meditation on Stalin.
3: The Song of Beria.
4: The Song of the Motherland.
5: The Fight for the Motherland.
6: Everything for the Motherland.
7: The Song of the NKVD Warriors.
8: The Song of the Chekists.
9: The Song of the Distant Frontier Post.
10: The March of the Border Guards.

THE NKVD'S concerns about prisoners' welfare seem rather touching until we remember that the inspectors wished to ensure that the slaves were kept in rude enough health to fulfill their mounting work norms. As for improving the food and providing medical care, these benefits were extended for the utilitarian purpose of helping viable prisoners recover sufficiently to return to work. As one inspector calculated, "from October of 1940, to the first half of March 1941, there were 3,472 cases of frostbite, thanks to which 42,334 working days were lost." He was most agitated about the resultant drag on economic output. Regarding these "work norms," they were absurd.

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Teams of prisoners could be required to mine 5.5 tons of coal each day — impossible even for the hardiest of Stakhanovites among them, who were rewarded with extra rations as they worked themselves to death — or to dig nine cubic yards of mud, or to fell trees without saws.

Once prisoners became too weak to keep up, they were left to die. Life in the slave-clogged Gulag was all for one and every man for himself. While awaiting their fate, these inmates — like biblical unfortunates cast out into the wilderness — were shunned by their fellows. They became, in camp lingo, *fitili* ("wicks," as in those atop a candle, soon snuffed out) or, less metaphorically, *dokhodyagi* ("goners"). These zombies suffered dementia, night-blindness, incontinence, scurvy, and pellagra. Utter dehumanization and self-degradation was their lot.

In a particularly engrossing chapter, Applebaum describes the prisoners' "Strategies for Survival." Unlike the terrible kingdoms of Chelmno and Treblinka, "in the end, prisoners survived. They survived even the worst camps, even the toughest conditions, even the war years, the famine years, the years of mass execution." Prisoners either learned to live without pity within three weeks of arrival or were doomed. Those who bribed their way into administrative tasks, or could obtain tobacco, or mugged the weak, or collaborated their way into becoming *pridurki* ("trusties") stood a far better chance of survival than the general laborers or the obstinately civilized. (There is no comparison to the Jewish *Sonderkommandos* of Auschwitz-Birkenau, whose average life extension was four months and whose tasks were more gruesome.)

Was choosing to work with camp authorities in order to survive an immoral act? Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, who himself flirted with the idea of becoming an informer, certainly thought so, for *pridurki* supervised the *zeks* and skimmed their rations: "Who short-weighed Ivan Denisovich's bread? Who stole his sugar by dampening it with water? Who kept fats, meat or good cereals from the common pot?" Others, such as Lev Razgon, disagreed. Some trusties helped others: "It was not that they were indifferent to the Ivan Denisoviches who went out to fell timber or that they felt estranged from them. Simply, they could not help those who did not know how to do anything other than physical work."

Since most prisoners, no matter their talents, were drafted into the hard-labor brigades, the key to surviving the Gulag was learning how to give the *appearance* of working; it was a practice known as *Tufta*. A Polish woman recounted that the champion fish processors in her facility were merely the "cleverest cheaters." Instead of packing jars full of herring, they threw in a few bits and tossed the rest away, thus exceeding their impossible work norms and earning full rations. Another inmate, detailed to build camp bathhouses, picked up an invaluable lesson in how to disguise sloppy workmanship: fill cracks in the structure not with concrete, but with moss.

Now magnify these individual examples and apply them to the Soviet economy at large. Several thousand half-empty herring jars shipped from some seaside *lagpunkt*, replicated billions of times in every industry with the

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same lackadaisical attitude over some 70 years — it amounts to systemic fraud and shoddiness from top to bottom. First, a bathhouse with freezing air whistling through the moss-covered cracks; eventually, owing to the multiplier effect, airliners falling from the sky and apartment buildings that collapse.

The Gulag version of the communist-era joke, "they pretend to pay us, we pretend to work," might have been, "we pretend to work, they pretend we are working, and Moscow pretends not to notice the pretense." Indeed, Applebaum cites an impressively detailed and exact 124-page report, dating from 1940, on the production figures of dozens of forestry camps, factory camps, mines, and collective farms. Moscow must have been pleased to see that the total value of Gulag production that year was an Enron-like 2,659.5 million rubles. It is a fantastic (literally) figure.

Generations of Soviet leaders distorted reality to fit their socialist preconceptions; the Gulag faithfully played along. It was the Empire's new clothes. In an *Alice Through the Looking Glass* way, the Gulag reflected the communist system as a whole: From the gold mines of Vorkuta to the collective farm camps of Uzbekistan to the prisoner-operated Krasnoyarsk nuclear power plants, a beautiful, rationally planned economic ideal was inevitably subverted by chaotic reality.

Stalin, above all, recognized how heavily his empire was addicted to the Gulag narcotic. To forestall collapse, he signaled the end of the "early release" scheme for well-behaved, productive workers as early as 1938, when he addressed the Supreme Soviet: "Could we not think of some other form of reward for their work — medals, or such like? We are acting incorrectly, we are disturbing the work of the camp. Freeing these people may be necessary, but from the point of view of the national economy, it is a mistake . . . we will free the best people, and leave the worst." It was not until late in the war, by way of contrast, that Germany would come to depend on Speer's slaves, who were mostly engaged in producing munitions.

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LEAVING ASIDE the surreal image of prisoners patheticallly accepting Productivity Merit Badges instead of their liberty, the phantasmagoria of the Gulag would be the death of the Empire. By the 1950s, owing to the camps' fictitious output's not offsetting outlay, it was clear that the Gulag was a massive financial liability once the costs of labor (that of the guards, primarily), fraud, food, clothing, medicine, and

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accommodation were factored in. It was not a Free Cashflow Positive concern, as I believe they say on Wall Street. Decades later, when the entire Soviet enterprise was reckoned to be bankrupt — morally and politically as well as economically — the terrible mirage finally dissolved.

Applebaum's structuralist orientation, I think, slightly underplays the role of communist ideology and the Russian mentality in the formation and maintenance of the Gulag in favor of this economic interpretation. Nevertheless, in the end that is a hopelessly minor cavil to what is, by any lights, a magnificent history colorfully written, expertly organized, shrewdly observed, and exhaustively researched. If Solzhenitsyn was the Gulag's Gibbon, Applebaum is its Boswell.

Theorists and Mullahs

By Cheryl Miller

Azar Nafisi. *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. Random House. 347 pages. $23.95

On saturday, April 11, the biggest names in literary theory convened at the University of Chicago for what was billed as an "intellectual town meeting" about the future of literary criticism and the study of literature. Hosted by the journal *Critical Inquiry*, the conference was to be the "starship Enterprise of criticism and theory" — at least according to the journal's editor and chief theorist, W.J.T. Mitchell. Discussion touched on everything from the movie *Memento* to the war in Iraq — that is, it explored everything but literature. And the few remarks the theorists had for the future of criticism attested only to its increasing irrelevance.

Academic superstar Stanley Fish, in a now oft-quoted statement, declared, "I wish to deny the effectiveness of intellectual work. And especially, I hope to counsel people against the decision to go into the academy because they hope to be effective beyond it." Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates agreed: "I missed the day theory was politically transformative." News of theory's death-knell made headlines at no less than the *New York Times*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *New Criterion*.

Looking back at the past few years of literary theory, it's hard to see what all the fuss is about. To quote a dead white male from the phallocentric, imperialist Western canon, the whole conference and the surrounding coverage has been much ado about nothing — for if theory really is dying, it has been one slow and agonizing death. As early as 1989, Fish was announcing the fall of literary theory and proclaiming the rise of "posttheory": "Theory's day is dying; the hour is late; and the only thing left for a theorist to do is say so." Ten years later, Andrew Delbanco wrote an essay in the *New York Review of Books* with the self-explanatory title "The Decline and Fall of

Cheryl Miller is a doctoral student in the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago and an editor at theamericanscene.com.

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Literature." Novelists such as David Lodge and Richard Russo have made a cottage industry out of dissecting the various absurdities that comprise most English departments' syllabi. And even a cursory glance at the titles of the papers presented at the annual convention of the Modern Language Association provides sufficient evidence of the field's slow slide into irrelevance and frivolity. (Among the more eyebrow-raising are such panels as "Sex With Aliens" and "Reading Transnationalism: Commodities, Corporate Genealogies, and KFC.") Tom Wolfe is even planning a novel about that absurd institution, the American university — with a special nod to the humanities departments, no doubt — though one wonders what need there is for satire when those in the field are already so happy to make caricatures of themselves.

BUT PERHAPS reports of the death of theory and literature have been exaggerated. Look at the recent reviews that have greeted Azar Nafisi's memoir of life and letters in Iran after the Islamic Revolution, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. Critics have praised Nafisi for "reminding us of the limitless power of literature — of art — to reveal and to transform" (Jonathan Yardley, in the *Washington Post*); for offering such an "eloquent brief on the transformative powers of fiction" (Michiko Kakutani, in the *New York Times*); and for providing "a stirring testament to the power of Western literature to cultivate democratic change" (Heather Hewett, in the *Christian Science Monitor*).

In what becomes one of the book's central themes, Nafisi argues that the act of reading is always colored by our place in the world. The novels she writes about are forever linked to her life in Tehran; as she says in the opening chapter, "It is of *Lolita* I want to write, but right now there is no way I can write about that novel without also writing about Tehran." Nafisi's words are echoed in the penultimate chapter, in which she recalls a friend's words to her: "You will not be able to write about Austen without writing about us, about this place where you rediscovered Austen. . . . This is the Austen you read here, in a place where the film censor is blind and where they hang people in the streets and put a curtain across the sea to segregate men and women." Yet while Nafisi's interpretations of the novels discussed in the book have been informed by a particular circumstance, they nonetheless have as much to say to us in the West as to those in Tehran — if not even more. In Chicago, we long ago lost sight of the political relevance of a particular interpretation of *Lolita*, but in Tehran, it remains, as one of Nafisi's students says, a "matter of life and death."

If literature has dropped off the radar screen for most so-called literary critics in America today, it was the lifeblood of Nafisi's resistance to the mullahs who considered all art — save for that of the revolutionary bent — irredeemably "decadent" and "Western." Now a professor at Johns Hopkins University, Nafisi is one of the most eloquent advocates of the written word to date. Every page of Nafisi's memoir is informed by her passion for literature and for teaching. Part social history, part literary treatise, *Reading Lolita in Tehran* tells the story of Nafisi's days as an instructor of English

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literature, first at the University of Tehran and then at Allameh University, and as the head of a secret class in which she and seven of her students read and discussed forbidden works of the Western canon: *The Great Gatsby*, *Daisy Miller*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Lolita*. It is the story of how a group of women, whose lives had become "more fictional than fiction itself," managed to find a refuge in literature, a place which allowed them, if only temporarily, "to escape and to create our own little pockets of freedom."

Ironically, in their attempt to control artistic expression and force it to conform to the teachings of the Revolution, the Islamic government of Iran created for themselves a bogeyman, a monster of almost unstoppable power.

From the very beginning, the Iranian Revolution manifested itself as a battle over culture. "The Islamic Republic's first task had been to blur the lines and boundaries between the personal and the political, thereby destroying both," Nafisi writes. To that end, publishing houses and bookstores were burned down; novelists were jailed; newspapers and magazines suppressed; art censored and banned. Personal freedoms, such as choosing to wear the veil or even kissing one's husband in public, were derided as "bourgeois" and "decadent." The aim of the ayatollahs, Nafisi writes, was to "re-create" the people of Iran in accordance with an imagined ideal. Nafisi describes her life in Iran under such conditions as pervaded by a feeling of ghostliness; she and her students had become "the figments of someone else's imagination." The only way to survive was to create "counterrealities," so literature became to Nafisi and her students a "necessity," a means by which they could reassert their own identities outside the ayatollahs' vision of them.

Ironically, in their attempt to control artistic expression and force it to conform to the teachings of the Revolution, the Islamic government of Iran created for themselves a bogeyman, a monster of almost unstoppable power. Unlike the West, in which artists, critics, and writers are given virtually absolute freedom of expression but are typically met with indifference as reward for their labors, in Iran, Nafisi explains, amateurish and even bad work was followed with the utmost enthusiasm, so desirous were the people for an escape from their difficult lives. Nafisi describes a clumsy rendition of the Gipsy Kings' music that plays to a full house and whose audience would have given the performers a standing ovation — if only clapping had not been outlawed as "un-Islamic." A special screening of films by the Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky attracts audiences from all over Iran who fight over the much-coveted tickets, despite the fact that the film is without subtitles and has been

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censored "out of recognition." In one of the more bizarre tales that Nafisi relates, the government attempts to murder members of the Iranian Writers Association by pushing the bus taking them to a convention in Armenia off a cliff. "Where else in the world," a friend asks her, "would a talk on *Madame Bovary* draw such crowds and nearly lead to a riot?"

Looking back at Iran's liberal past, the same friend ruefully tells Nafisi that "young people listen more to Michael Jackson and read your Nabokov with more enjoyment and enthusiasm than you and I ever did in our decadent youth." And Nafisi agrees; if nothing else, she writes, she is "thankful" to the Revolution for teaching her "to love Austen and James and ice cream and freedom."

THE POWER OF art in the face of tyranny is a theme by no means unique to the Iranian Revolution. It is no accident that the book begins with an epigraph taken from a poem by the Polish writer Czeslaw Milosz. Indeed, Nafisi frequently appeals to the rich lineage of dissident writing, quoting such authors as the Russian poet Osip Mandelstam and novelist Vladimir Nabokov, among others, and connecting their experiences of oppression and heartbreak to her own and to that of her students. Yet for Nafisi, all literature belongs in a sense to the tradition of dissident writing. Taking as her maxim Theodor Adorno's claim that "the highest form of morality is not to feel at home in one's home," Nafisi argues that literature is fundamentally apolitical and "subversive." It stands outside the accepted customs of everyday life and the demands of ideology and asks that the reader look at the world through an alien perspective, one which sees as new and unusual the very things the reader takes for granted. Literature remains a permanent voice of dissent. Although the novel is essentially apolitical, it is also democratic — not because its content asserts certain values, but by virtue of its form: "A good novel is one that shows the complexity of individuals, and creates enough space for all these characters to have a voice; in this way a novel is called democratic — not that it advocates democracy but that by nature it is so."

From this perspective, the real threat to literature is not censorship, but rather the attempt by others to politicize it, to make literature into a mere vehicle for ideology. The Islamic Republic, Nafisi writes, made authors the "guardians of morality" and, in doing so, "denied any merit to literary works, considering them important only when they were handmaidens to something seemingly urgent — namely ideology." Nafisi is well aware that such a project, unlike censorship, has no need of a police state or punitive laws and thus is all the more pernicious. When discussing Henry James with a fellow scholar, Nafisi remarks as to how "unfashionable" the authors they love have become in the eyes of literary theorists. "Everyone has gone postmodern," her colleague agrees. "They can't even read the text in the original — they're so dependent on some psuedo-philosopher to tell them what it says." Later, when one of her students denounces Jane Austen as a "colonial writer," Nafisi is initially confused until she buys a copy of Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*. "It was

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ironic that a Muslim fundamentalist should quote Said against Austen," she writes. "It was just as ironic that the most reactionary elements in Iran had come to identify with and co-opt the work and theories of those considered revolutionary in the West."

Nafisi here reveals a surprising paradox: If literature and theory are no longer "politically transformative," it is precisely because they have been so politicized. In their attempt to force literary works into an ideological schema, both the theorists of Chicago and the Islamists of Tehran ignored that which truly makes a novel transformative: its ability to make us look at the world with different eyes. Nafisi's leftist and Islamist students have in common this inability to empathize with others, to see beyond their own definitions of right and wrong. Like the villain of *Lolita*, Humbert Humbert, they solipsize texts and people; "these politicized critics" "see only themselves and what they want to see." Nafisi's Islamist and leftist students read *The Great Gatsby* and see only the depravity of a corrupt and materialistic West — and thus miss the novel's beauty, its sadness, and, most important, the way in which it reveals the "complexities of life and of individuals."

Our postmodern critics endeavor to remake literature according to their own ideological vision: as the story of class warfare, the history of sexist oppression, or a tool of Islamic revolution. Nafisi cautions that people who impose such a reductive view on what they are reading will likely end up imposing one in action. There is, for Nafisi, a tyrannical way of reading a text. But the reader who remains open to the author's voice may catch a glimpse of liberation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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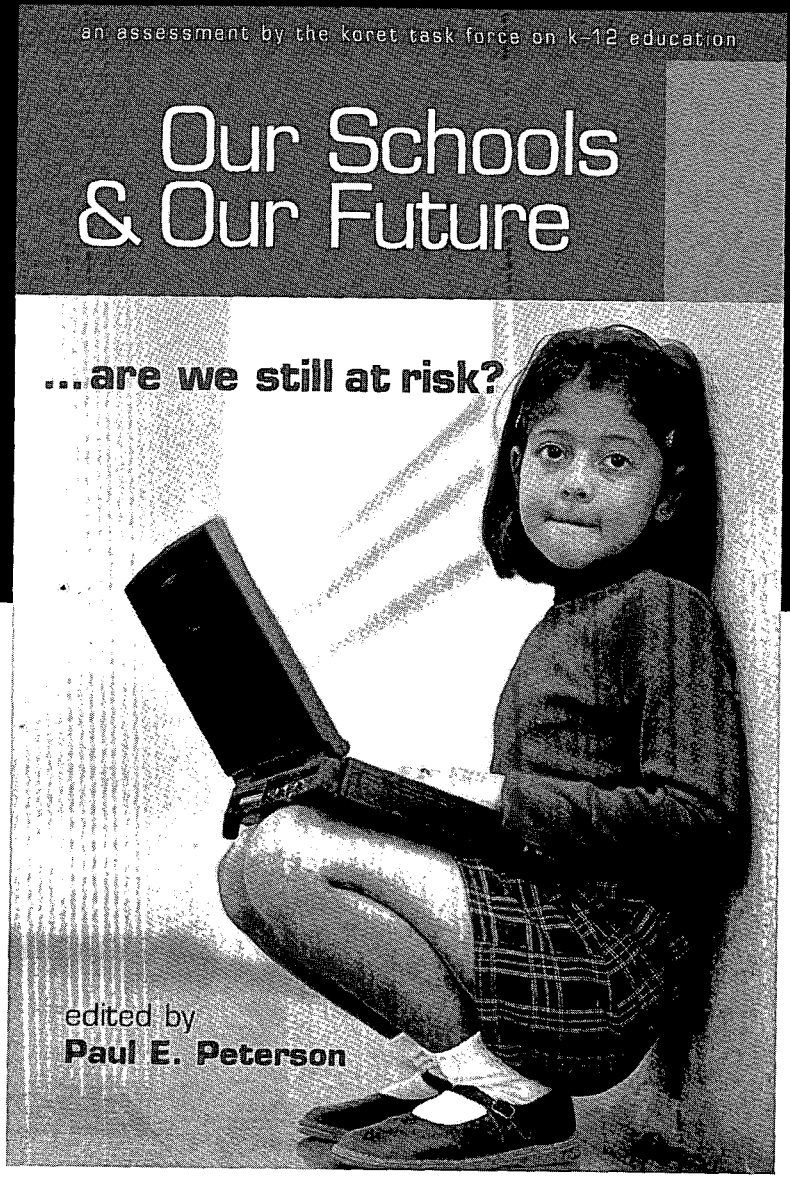
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